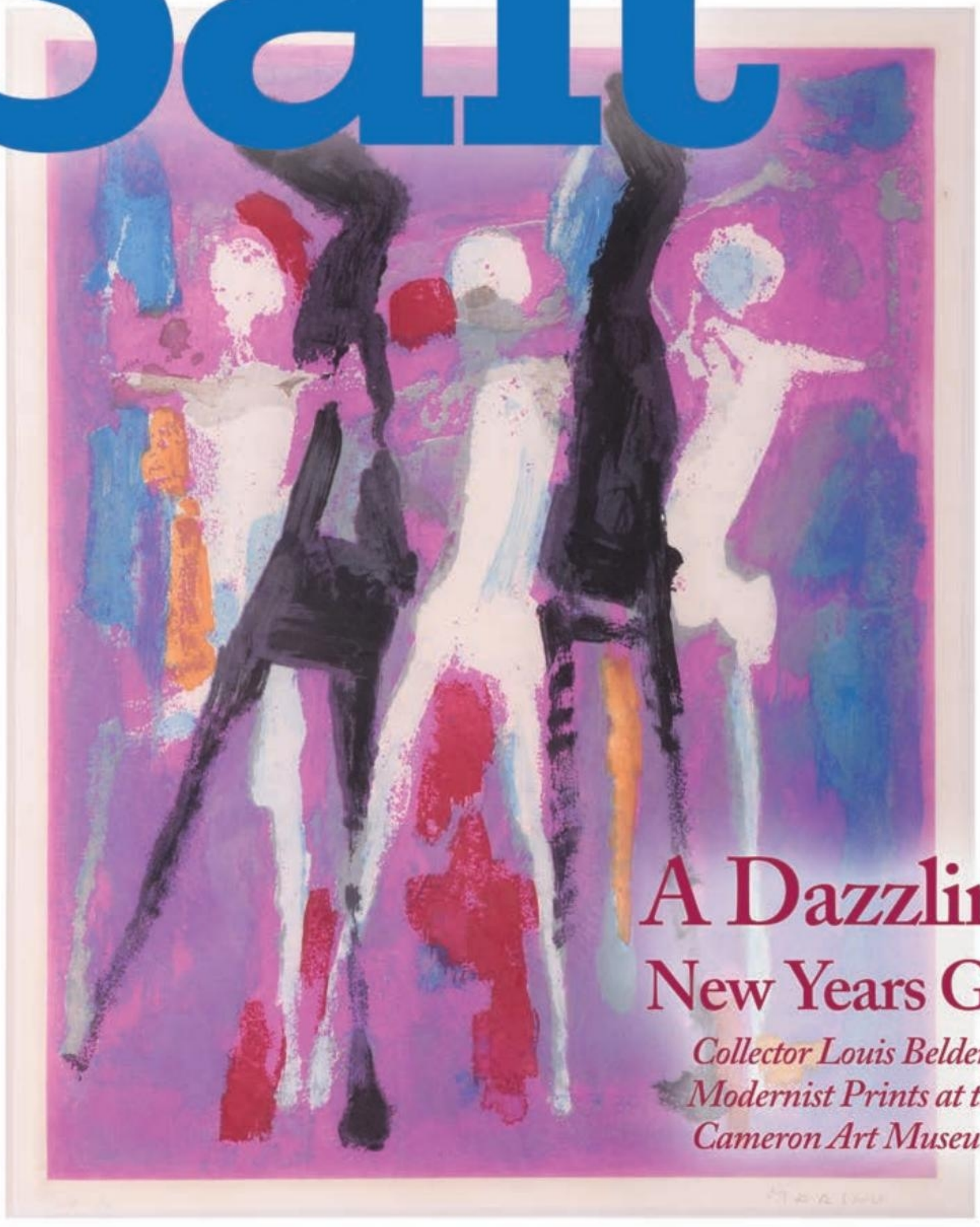
Salt

January/February 2020

The Art & Soul of Wilmington



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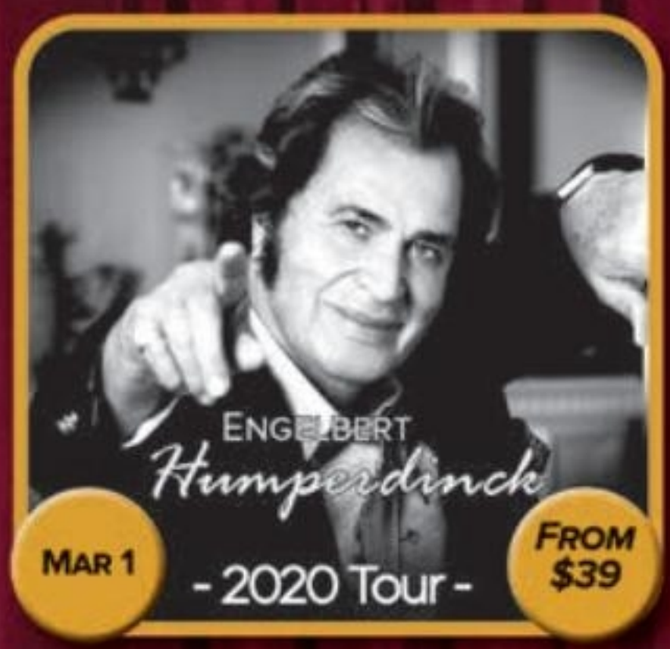

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CAPE FEAR STAGE

1035 Ocean Ridge Drive • Landfall • $4,475,000

"Three Bridges" Landfall's most spectacular waterfront property consists of 2 1/2 lots overlooking the intracoastal waterway with distant views of Wrightsville Beach, Figure 8 Island and the Atlantic Ocean! This ingenious design by Wilmington architect, Michael Moorefield, consists of three structures connected to each other by way of three bridges.

11 Beach Bay Lane • Figure Eight Island • $2,895,000

Located on nearly an acre in the center of the area's most sought after beach, Figure 8 Island. The house features a reverse floor plan with stunning views of the ocean and sound. The 4 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath bath design has been updated with a beautiful granite/stainless kitchen with a huge breakfast bar overlooking the expansive living area with vaulted ceiling and dining area, also vaulted.

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1012 Windlea Run • Rabbit Run • $1,650,000

Overlooking the tranquil waters of Hewlett's Creek, this waterfront masterpiece includes deeded deep water 24' boat slip and features 170' of water frontage. A new gourmet kitchen includes all Thermador appliances including gas cook top, and warming drawer, granite counters and custom cabinets.

19 Comber Road • Figure Eight Island • $1,595,000

Located on the north end of North Carolina's most private beach, Figure 8 Island, this 4 bedroom, 4 1/2 bath contemporary beach design features outstanding ocean views from the second row location with easy beach boardwalk access. Enjoy beautiful sunrises from the double porches on the ocean side and glorious sunset from rear deck.

551 S. Lumina Avenue C-2 • Wrightsville Beach • $1,095,000

What could be better than south end ocean front on Wrightsville Beach? How about including a gazebo and 22 foot boat slip on Banks Channel! This top floor corner unit at The Doak has been recently updated with new flooring, carpet and interior paint. Fully furnished with excellent rental history, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths with granite/stainless kitchen and granite/tile baths.

1207 &1209 N. Lumina Avenue • Wrightsville Beach • $839,000

Build the home(s) of your dreams on this beautiful Wrightsville Beach homesite. This 60' wide lot is zoned R2 and can accommodate either 2 units or single family. Unobstructed ocean views looking down Shearwater Street provide the perfect building site with easy beach access. Walk the loop and bike to Tower 7, South Beach Grill and the Trolly Stop!

4 Mallard Street • Wrightsville Beach • $2,650,000

It's all about the ocean . . . Ocean views abound from the chef's kitchen featuring quartz counters with a huge center island, stainless Subzero, gas Wolf cooktop, Miele dishwasher plus Fisher-Paykel drawer dishwasher. Each bedroom features a large closet and en suite bath with the latest designer tile.

14&18 Raleigh Street • Wrightsville Beach • $1,995,000

Oceanfront - Rare adjoining two lot combination (one ocean front and one second row) on one of Wrightsville Beach's most sought after streets. Each lot is 50' x 100' and together would allow up to 7,000 square foot structure. Alternatively, the lots could accommodate separate structures of up to 3500 square feet each.

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1403 Quadrant Circle • Landfall • $1,199,000

A Landfall Georgian masterpiece, this all brick executive home sits high on a wooded knoll overlooking Quadrant Circle pond. Completely updated this open floor plan features large rooms, exquisite moldings including raised panel den off of the first floor master. Updates throughout the home including stainless and granite kitchen and granite counters in all baths.

2009 Scrimshaw Place • Landfall • $1,195,000

Overlooking the 9th hole of Landfall's Nicklaus Marsh course with easy access to the Landfall Clubhouse, this brick Georgian offers perhaps Landfall's favorite back porch. The fenced back yard and lush landscaping provide the perfect back drop for outdoor entertaining. Inside you'll find formal dining and soaring living room, a study and first floor master.

243 Williams Road • Myrtle Grove • $799,000

Super cool coastal cottage--truly one of a kind--overlooking the ICWW Masonboro Island and Atlantic Ocean. With unobstructed views and deeded water access, you will enjoy launching a paddle board, kayak or jon boat right off the beach. The undeveloped gem of south Masonboro Island is just a paddle away!

1608 Dye Place • Landfall • $699,900

How about this million dollar view?! Special features include quartz counters, stainless appliances, hickory floors, powder room built as safe room and lawn maintenance by the association.

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1012 DEEPWOOD PLACE

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1012 WINDLEA RUN

Vance Young: 910.232.8850 | List Price: $1,650,000

809 INLET VIEW DRIVE

Carla D. Lewis: 910.612.5220 | List price: $1,250,000

2601 SHANDY LANE

Cindy Southerland: 910.233.8868 | List Price: $1,649,000

2008 SEAWIND LANE

Catherine H. Casteen: 910.599.0811 | List Price: $1,350,000

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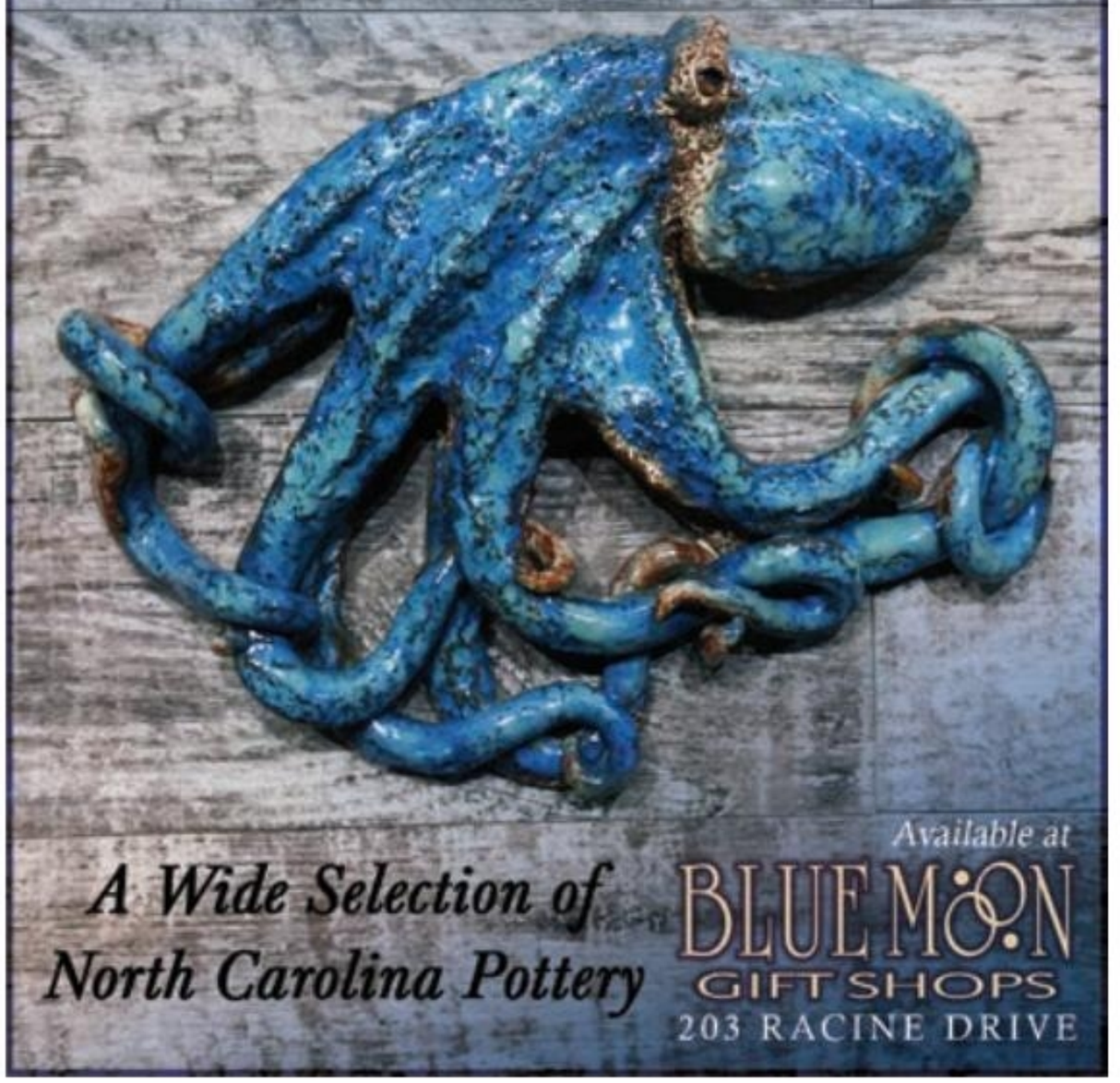

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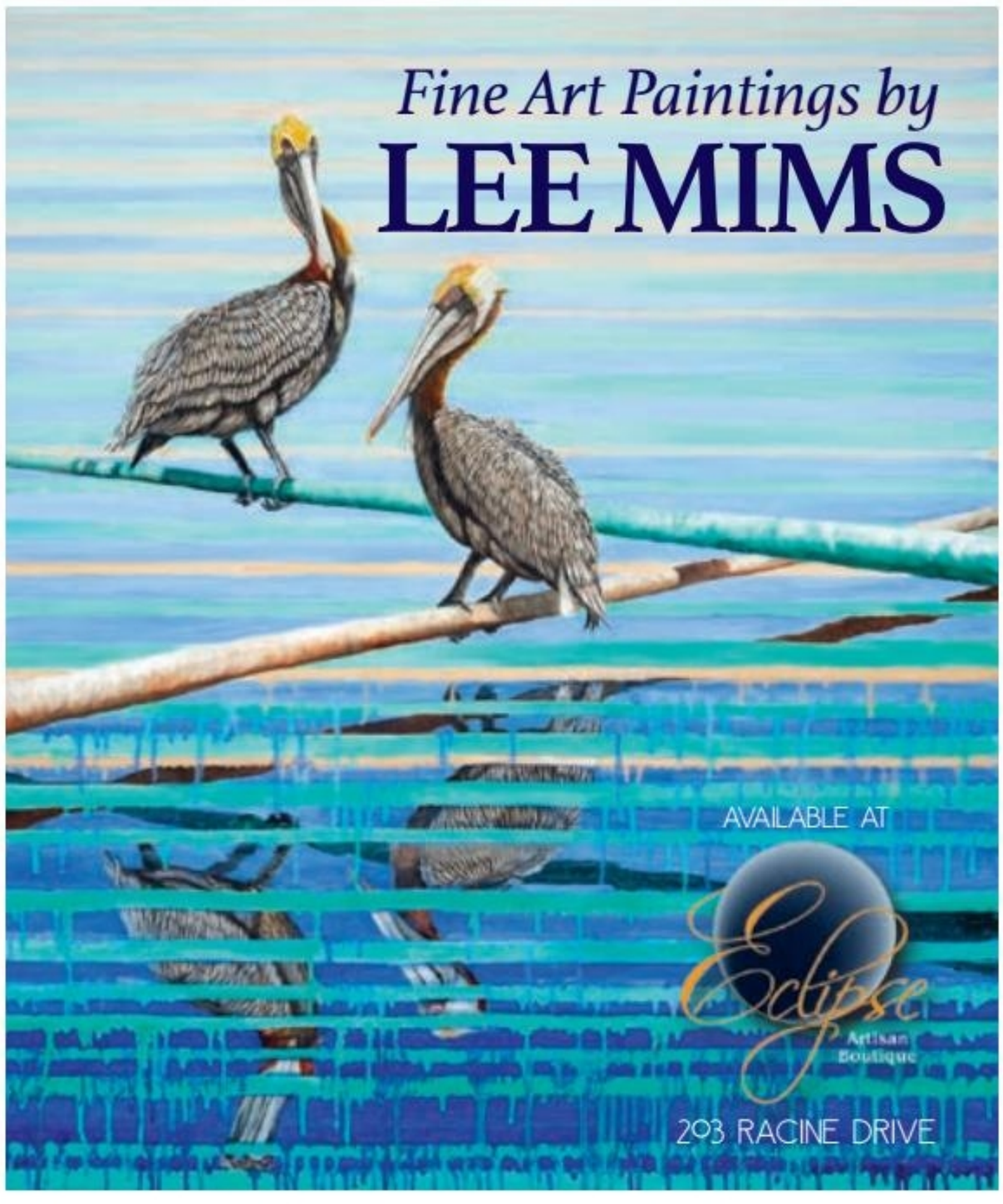

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ON THE COVER: **MARIO MARINI** (ITALIAN, 1901-1980)
Plate IV, from *Shakespeare II Portfolio*, (Set of 8), 1978
Color etching with aquatint and drypoint on arches paper, ed. 23/50 Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden
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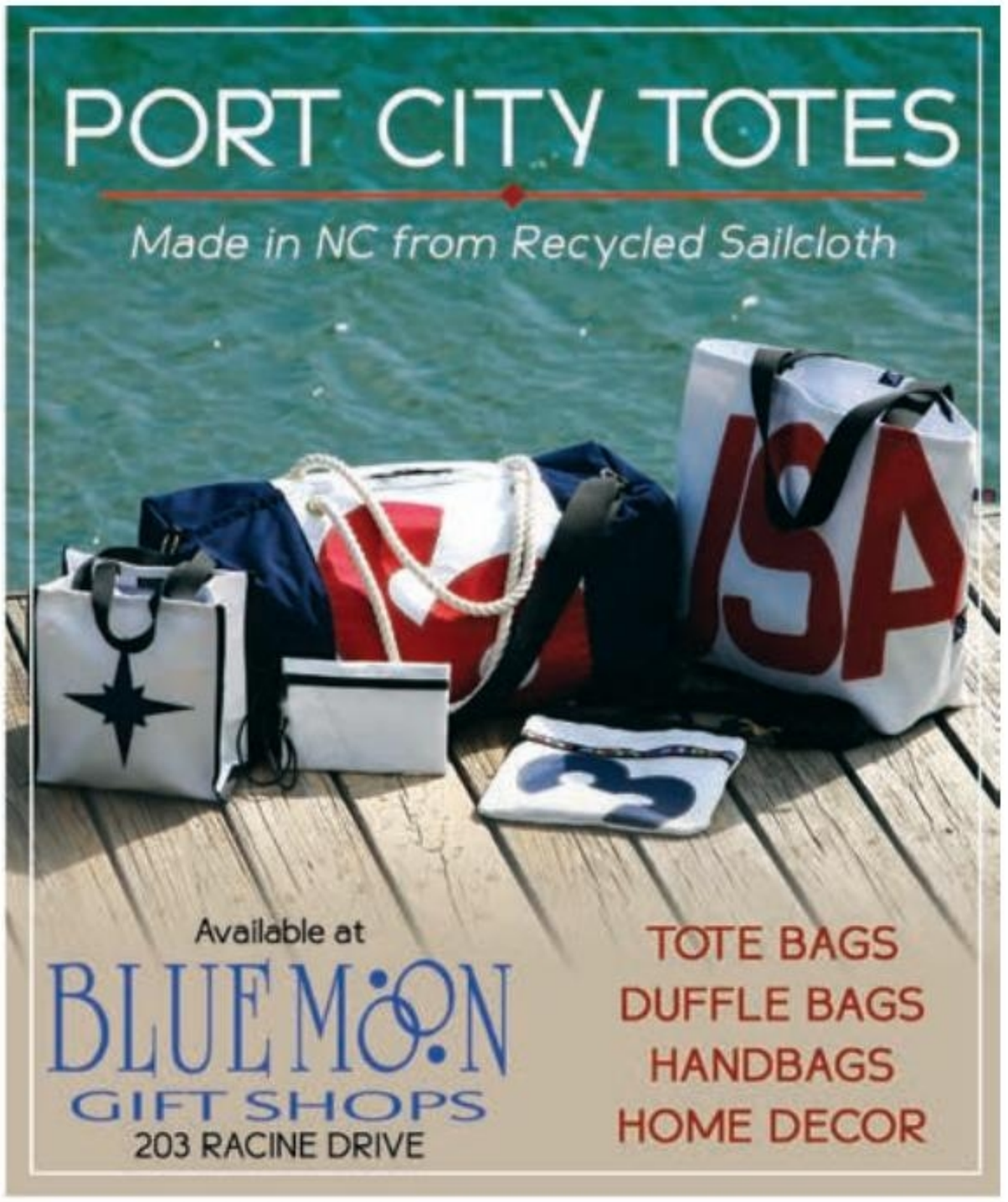
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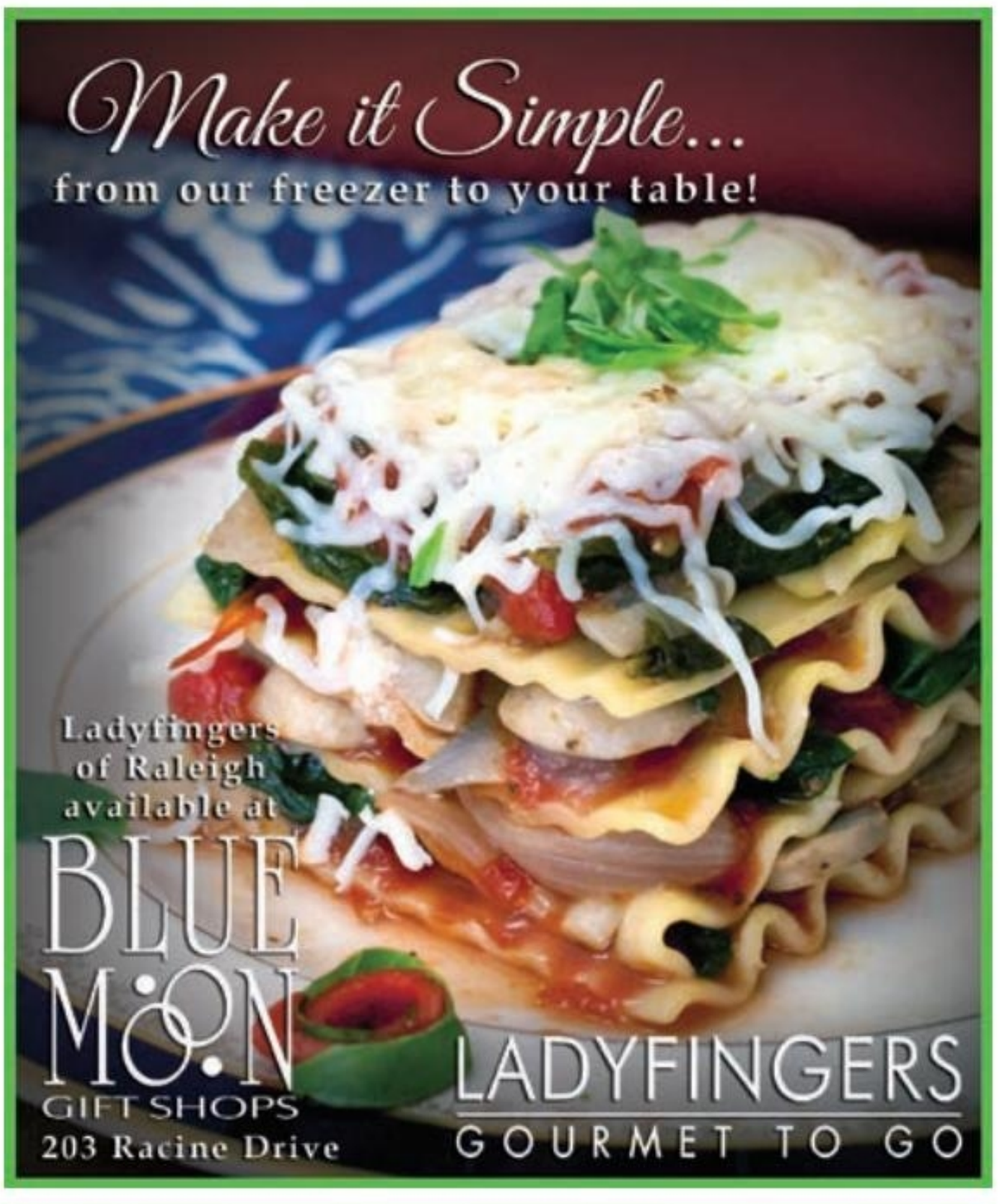
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For the Time Being

To count the hours . . . or make them count

By Jim Dodson

My office over the garage, which I fondly call the "Tree House," is a place where time stands still, in a manner of speaking, something of a museum for dusty artifacts and funky souvenirs that followed me home from six decades of traveling journalism. Among them is a collection of wristwatches that accompanied me most of the way. They're part of what I call Uncle Jimmy Bob's Museum of Genuine & Truly Unremarkable Stuff.

Most unremarkably (if you know me), many of the watches are broken or simply worn out from the misfortune of being attached to my person. Suffice it to say, I have a history of being tough on timepieces, having cracked more watch crystals than I can count, and either lost or damaged half a dozen of these loyal beauties by various means.

I suspect that a good shrink could have a field day with the fact that all these defunct watches are the same model and brand — the famous Timex Expedition models, an outdoors icon known for its durability and rustic beauty.

You can blame black-and-white television for this unholy devotion.

See, when I was a little kid and the TV world was not yet in living color — I was a highly impressionable son of a successful advertising executive, it should be noted — my favorite commercial was a spot for Timex watches in which suave company pitchman John Cameron Swayze subjected Timex watches to a series of live "torture tests" in order to prove that the durable timepiece could "take a licking and keep on ticking."

To this day I remember watching slugger Mickey Mantle wearing his Timex during batting practice. Other favorites included watches freed from solid blocks of ice by a wielded hammer, also dropped to the bottom of fish tanks for hours or put through the washing machine cycle, even attached to the bow of a roaring speedboat!

In fifth grade, I actually wrote a research paper on Timex watches, learning that the company started in 1854 in Waterbury, Connecticut, producing an affordable six-dollar clock using an assembly line process that may have inspired Henry Ford to do the same with cars half a century later. The company made its name by selling durable pocket watches for one dollar. Even Mark Twain carried one. During the Great Depression, they also introduced the first Mickey Mouse watch.

I received my first Timex watch for Christmas in 1966 and wore it faithfully everywhere — to bed, to baseball practice, even to Scout Camp where I took it off to do the mile swim and never saw it again, the start of a tradition.

The next one I owned was an Expedition model purchased for about 25 bucks with lawn-mowing money. I wore that sucker all the way through high school, occasionally losing and finding it in unexpected places while putting it through the kind of personal abuse that would have made me a natural for Timex TV spots.

For high school graduation, my folks gave me an elegant Seiko watch, a sleek Japanese quartz model that never needed winding and kept perfect time but never felt right on my wrist.

I have no idea what happened to that lovely timepiece. Or at least I ain't telling.

By the end of college, I was safely back to Timex Expeditions, the cheap and durable watch that would accompany me — one lost or broken model at a time — across the next four decades.

I mention this because a month or so ago, during a particularly busy stretch, I misplaced my longest-running Expedition and, feeling it might be the end of time or at least civilization as we know it, impetuously ordered a replacement model from the Internet with guaranteed 24-hour delivery . . . only to discover, the very day the new watch arrived, that the missing watch was under my car seat all along, keeping perfect time.

God only knows how it got there.

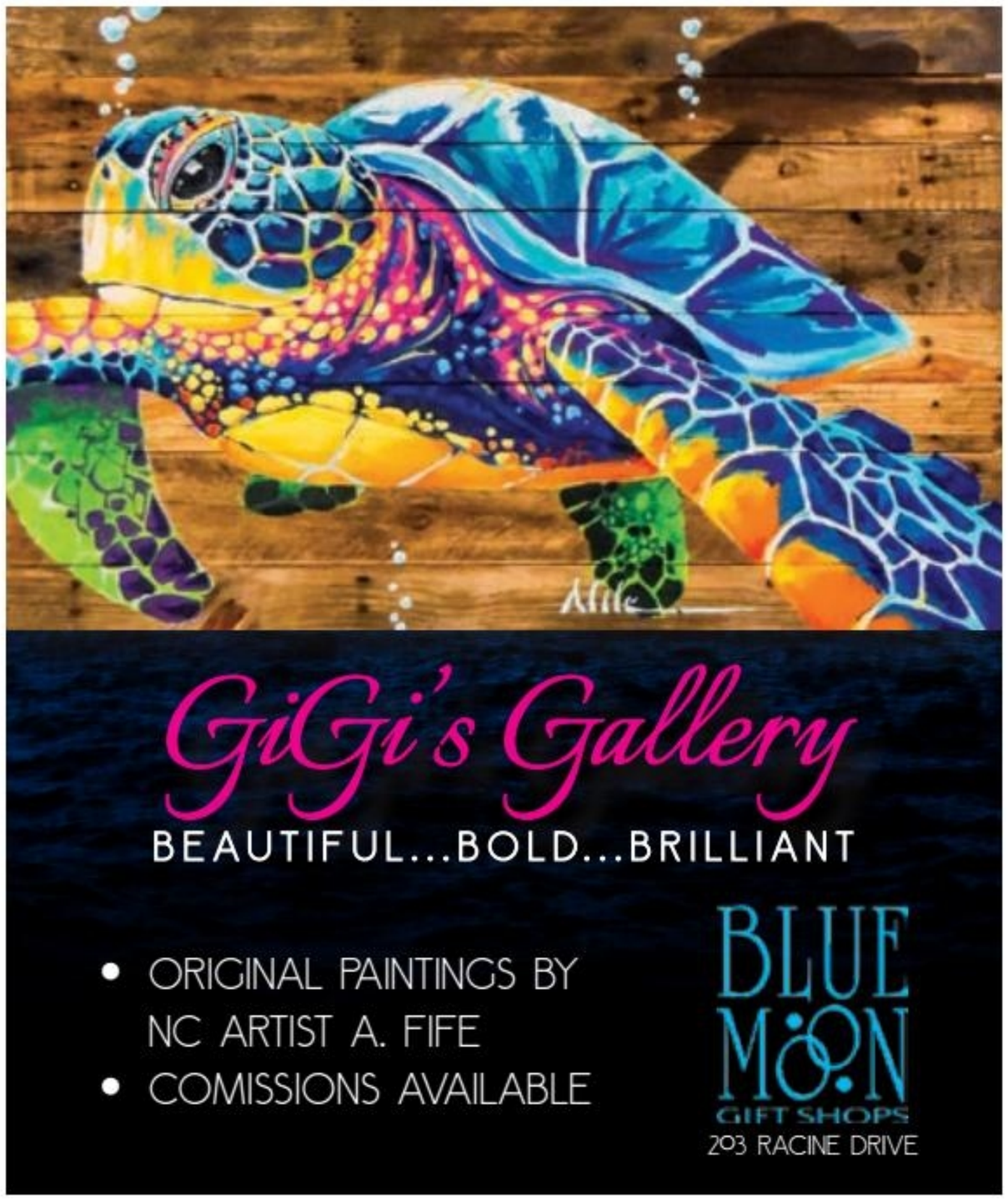
But the message wasn't lost on me.

Why do I need *anything* delivered within 24 hours? Instead, perhaps it's *time* to slow down and pay attention to what is already happening here and now, to pause and take notice of the simple things that give my life its greatest purpose and meaning.

The start of a new year is a time when many of us pause to take stock of how far we've come this year and may be headed in the year to come. After a certain age, the question of how to make use of whatever *time* we have left to do the things we still hope — or need — to do is also on our minds.

Yet in modern America, "where time is money," most of us live by the silent tyranny of the ticking clock, obsessed with achieving deadlines and keeping schedules. With no time to waste, we put everything on the clock or at least mark it down in the Day-Timer, making helpful "To-Do" lists and dinner reservations, planning holidays a year in advance, booking flights to warmer seas, appointments with the decorator or therapist, paying the mortgage on time, picking up the kids at 3 —all of it shaped by, and subject to, the hopeless idea of saving time.

Someone, my late Grandmother Taylor liked to say, is always wait-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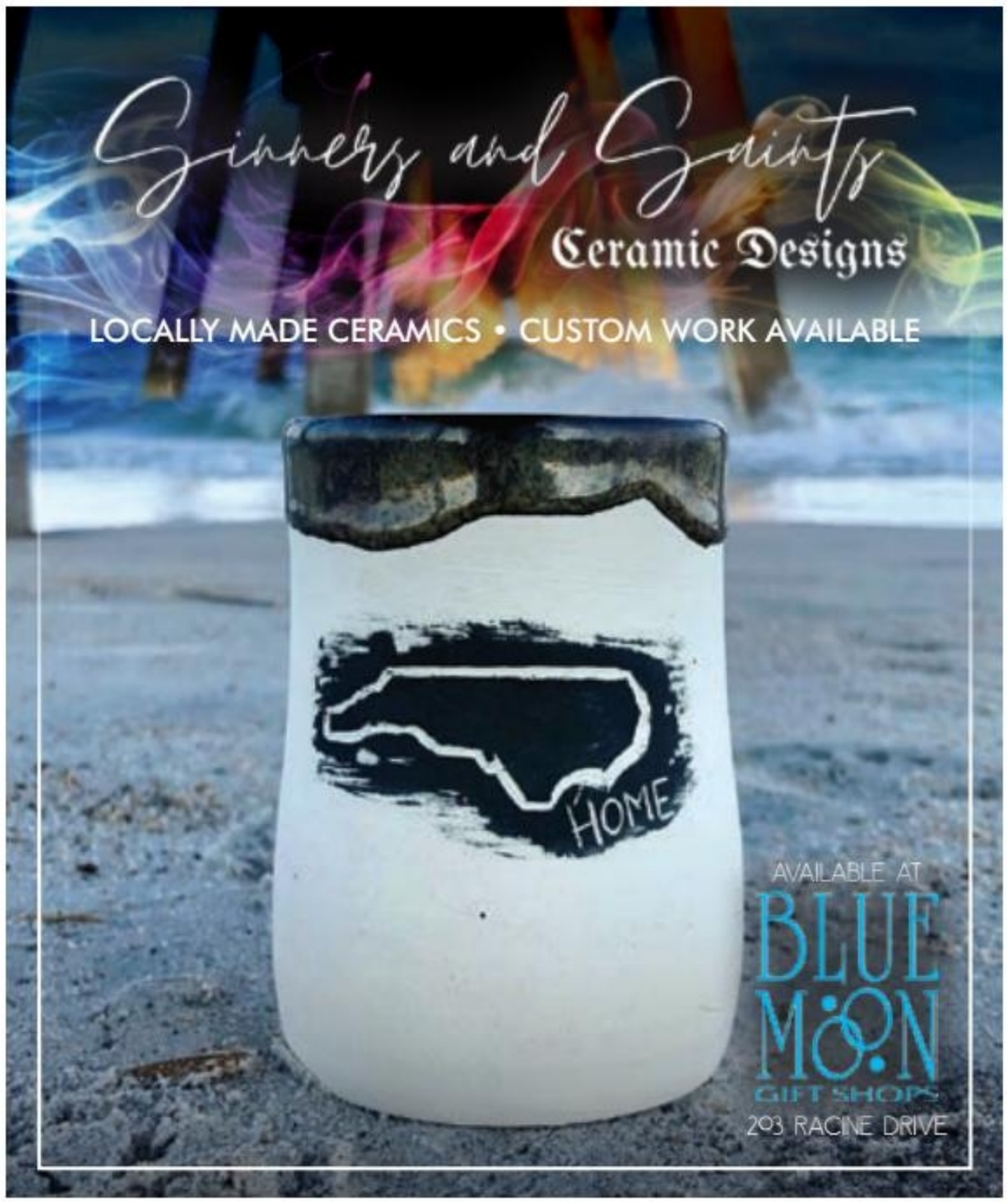
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ing beneath the clock for a child to be born, a life to pass on, a decision to be made or a verdict to be rendered. A proper Southern Baptist lady who knew the Scriptures cold but enjoyed her evening toddy, she often told me, "Child, for the time being, you're on God's time. *This* is heaven."

A nice thought, but just to complicate matters on the planetary scale, there's the shadow of the infamous Doomsday Clock to contend with, the symbolic timepiece created by the world's concerned scientists that chillingly charts the steady devolvement of the planet's environmental and nuclear climates. In 2019, the minute hand was moved forward to two minutes to midnight.

So what happens next?

Presumably, God only knows that, too.

When it comes to contemplating the passing of time, I often think about the month "out of time" my wife and young son and I spent following our noses through rural Italy and the Greek Islands with no firm travel agenda or even hotel reservations. We met an extraordinary range of unforgettable characters and ate like gypsy kings. We swam in ancient seas, probed temple ruins and disappeared into another time, discovering a race of people who happily ignore the clock if it involves the chance for an interesting conversation about life, food or family. For the time being, it really was heaven. Somewhere along the way, I managed to lose yet another Expedition watch — but failed to notice for several days.

To us, a *siesta* between noon and 3 p.m. would be unthinkable in the heart of an ordinary work day, generally viewed as either a costly indulgence or colossal waste of time. Yet in Italy, Spain and many Arab cultures, the idea of pausing to take rest and recharge batteries in the midst of a busy day is viewed as a sensible restorative act, a way to slow down and keep perspective in a world forever speeding up.

From the mystical East, my Buddhist friends perceive time as an endless cycle of beginnings and ending, life and death and rebirth, time that is fluid and forever moving toward some greater articulation of what it means to be human. Native American spirituality embraces a similar idea of the sacred hoop of life, a cycle of rebirth that prompted Chief Seattle to remark that we humans struggle

with life not because we're human beings trying to be spiritual, but the other way around. A version of this quote is also attributed to French Jesuit priest and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, proving great souls think alike, even in different languages.

How ironic, in any case, that a booming West Coast city that is home to time-saving megaliths of commerce like Amazon, Starbucks, Costco and Microsoft is named for a man who lovingly presaged, decades ahead of his time, that we humans essentially belong to the Earth and not the other way around, and that, in time, when the last tree falls and final river is poisoned, we will finally learn that we cannot eat money or replace whatever is forever lost in time.

Fearing his own time brief on this planet, Transcendentalist Henry Thoreau went to live by Walden Pond "because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

I hold a similar desire close to my own aging heart, though in the short-term I sure would like to finish a trio of half-written novels I've been cobbling on for years, write a few more books about subjects that greatly interest me, and maybe — if there's any time leftover — build a cabin in the Blue Ridge like the one my late papa and I always talked about "someday" building together.

For the record, just for fun, I'd also like to learn to speak Italian, play the piano and spend a full summer exploring the fjords and forests of Scandinavia with my wife.

So much to do. So little time to do it.

That seems to be our fate. At least mine.

On golden autumn afternoons and quiet winter days, however, I swear I can almost hear Chief Seattle, Father De Chardin and Grandma Taylor whispering to me that we are all living on *God's Time*, wise to wake up and slow down and live fully in the *now* as we journey into a brave new decade, hopefully appreciating the many gifts of time and its precious brevity.

For the time being, I now have two fine Expedition watches that can take a licking and keep on ticking.

Though how long I can do the same, goodness me, only time will tell.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.

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SaltWorks

Tidewater Camellia Club Show and Sale

What better way to beat the winter blues than a trip to the Tidewater Camellia Club's 70th annual Winter Show and Sale? This is one of the largest shows in the country, with exhibitors and judges from all over the Southeast. Judges from the American Camellia Society will evaluate the hundreds of blooms presented by camellia experts and amateur fanciers. There will also be an art show as well as a children's art display and activity corner. Admission: Free for spectators. Feb. 22, 10 to 3 p.m.; Feb. 23, 1- 3 p.m. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6202 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For registration and other information: tidewatercamelliaclub.org.

La Cage Aux Folles

Opera House Theatre Company presents *La Cage Aux Folles*, a musical based on the 1973 French play of the same name that follows the comedic travails of Saint-Tropez nightclub manager Georges and his partner, Albin, when Georges' son brings home his bride-to-be and her conservative parents to visit. Book by Harvey Fierstein with lyrics and music by Jerry Herman. Directed by Ray Kennedy. Tickets: $25-$33. Thalian Hall, 301 Chestnut St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

Talent on Tap

The North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble is recognized as one of the premier youth tap ensembles in the world. The 40 dancers from throughout North Carolina, under the tutelage of artistic director Gene Edler, perform a mix of contemporary choreography and traditional rhythm tap. The group has toured all over the world and collaborated with such diverse groups as the Mallarme Chamber Players, the Greensboro Symphony, and the Squirrel Nut Zippers. Don't miss it. Tickets: $10. Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or ncyte.org.

Winter Antiques

One-stop shopping for antiques lovers, the 50th annual Wilmington Antique Show and Sale hosts more than 35 dealers with wares ranging from American and English furniture to rugs, silver, primitives, vintage clothing and more. Presented by the North Carolina Junior Soriosis and North Carolina Soriosis. Tickets: $10. Jan. 17-18, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Jan. 19, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission valid for all three days. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 799-1324 or wilmingtonantiquesshow.com.

All That Jazz

The Hotel Ballast is the setting for the 40th annual North Carolina Jazz Festival, which this year features a performance by rising jazz star Veronica Swift with the Emmet Cohen Trio on opening night. Some of the weekend all-stars include New Orleans trumpet player Ben Polcer, New York drummer Chris Gelb, Houston Person on saxophone, and celebrated jazz pianist Champian Felton. Admission: $15-$225. Jan. 23 to 25, 7:30 p.m. Hotel Ballast, 301 N. Water St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 793-1111 or ncjazzfestival.org.

Feeling Perky

Attention, coffee and tea lovers: It's time for the first annual Wilmington Coffee Fest, a day of caffeination, food, arts vendors, live music and raffles. There will be representatives from coffee shops, roasters, artisans and just about everything coffee you could ever dream of. Coffee vendors will offer live demonstrations, lectures and a barista latte art competition. The event is in two locations: the Community Arts Center at the corner of 2nd and Orange Streets; and Waterline Brewing Company, 721 Surry St. Tickets: $18. Feb 1, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For info: (910) 431-8517 or wilmingtoncoffeefest.com.

Remembering Dr. King

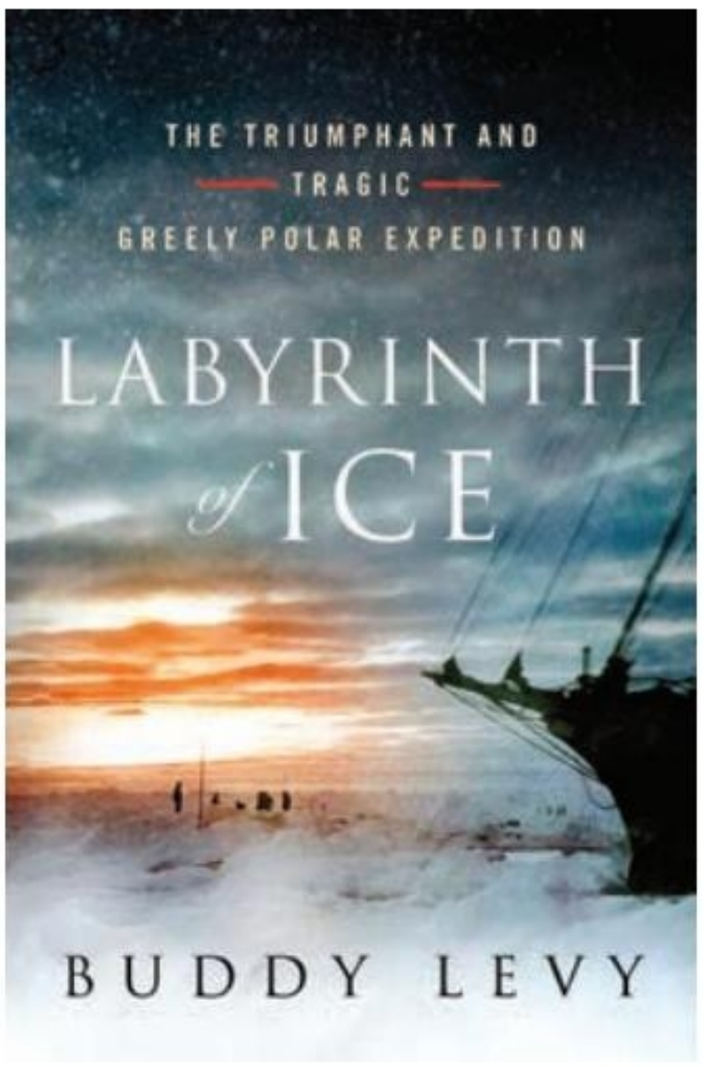
A celebration of African-American musical traditions, "We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." combines traditional gospel, classical jazz, Broadway and spirituals interwoven with excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s recorded speeches. Produced and directed by Damien Sneed, who has collaborated and conducted works for Wynton Marsalis and Lawrence Brownlee, and has toured with Aretha Franklin and Diana Ross. Tickets: $20-$50. Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

Keep on Shagging

Come get your shag on at this year's East Coast Shag Classic in Wrightsville Beach, a weekend-long tribute to Carolina beach music. There will be shag and line-dancing lessons, open dancing, and different themes and bands nightly, including Band of Oz (Feb. 13), Gary Lowder and Smokin' Hot (Feb. 14), and Blackwater Band (Feb 15). Proceeds benefit Hope Abounds, a nonprofit that supports individuals battling cancer. See website for tickets. Hotel packages available. Feb. 13 to 16. Holiday Inn Resort, 1706 Lumina Ave., Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 799-7178 or hopeabounds.org/east-coast-shag-classic.

The Unforgiving Arctic

Story of the perilous Lady Franklin Bay Expedition



By Stephen E. Smith

In July 1881, the *USS Proteus* set sail from Newfoundland for Lady Franklin Bay in the Canadian Arctic. On board were the expedition's commander, Lt. Adolphus W. Greely, astronomer Edward Israel, photographer George Rice, and 21 men chosen from the U.S. military. Their stated purpose was to establish a meteorological observation station as part of the First International Polar Year. But Greely had a personal objective: to reach "Farthest North," an achievement claimed by the British Navy decades earlier.

A month after departing Newfoundland, the *Proteus* anchored off Ellesmere Island in the Arctic Circle, where tons of supplies were unloaded, a substantial building constructed, and the expedition's work began in earnest. The four years that followed were to be the most harrowing and terrible of all recorded Arctic voyages.

Buddy Levy's *Labyrinth of Ice* is the latest and most comprehensive popular history of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition (the undertaking's official designation), recounting in detail the travails that befell men subsiding on meager rations and caught in continuous sub-zero temperatures — sometimes 50 degrees below — during extended periods of total darkness. Their suffering notwithstanding, Greely's men fulfilled their scientific obligations and maintained meticulous records that are useful today in our analysis of global warming. And during the first year of his Arctic sojourn, Greely also achieved his personal objective: Two of his men established Farthest North. Then the expedition settled in to await resupply ships that never arrived.

What befell the Greely Expedition is what doomed many of the Arctic and Antarctic voyages of the 19th and early 20th centuries: extreme privation. Without resupply, the expedition had to abandon their camp and head south, first by boat, then by sled and finally on foot, hoping to link up with relief ships headed in their direction. They were constantly impeded by ice — mountains of ice, jagged blocks of broken ice, icebergs, massive ice floes, ice in every possible configuration — making forward progress almost impossible, and denying the explorers sustenance and subjecting them to the unforgiving elements.

Relying on Greely's notebooks and the personal dairies of expedition members, Levy writes in measured, almost journalistic prose, describing the quirks of personality and the details of the inevitable conflicts that arose when the expedition's men were confined in life-threatening conditions. Greely was able to mediate most of these squabbles, but when rations grew short and shelter increasingly insubstantial, the conflicts grew more intense: "Pavy grew incensed, and when he started yelling at Whisler, the dutiful military man drew and leveled his pistol at Pavy to show there would be no more talk." Disagreements between Greely and the Expedition's doctor were a constant source of unease, and the growing tension among the starving men eventually led to the execution of Pvt. Charles Henry, who had confessed to stealing food, which he continued to do after numerous warnings.

In 1882, the relief ship *Neptune* was blocked by ice and forced to abandon its mission, leaving much-needed supplies in Newfoundland, thousands of miles south of the expedition. The *Proteus* attempted a rescue in 1883 but was crushed by pack ice and sank. The expedition would surely have perished but for Greely's dutiful wife, Henrietta, who had political and journalist connections. She lobbied constantly for her husband's rescue, and much of the book is given over to her unrelenting

efforts. She had to contend with a Washington bureaucracy that was painfully slow to act. There were boards of inquiry and much finger-pointing concerning failed relief efforts. But Henrietta's persistence yielded results, and a third rescue mission was finally mounted, despite Secretary of War Robert Todd Lincoln's reluctance to waste resources on "dead men."

By the time Greely and six of his surviving crew were located on the barren shores of Cape Sabine, they were hours from death. "Greely is that you?" a rescuer asked. "Yes — seven of us left — here we are, dying like men," Greely replied. "Did what I came to do — beat the record," meaning he'd obtained Farthest North.

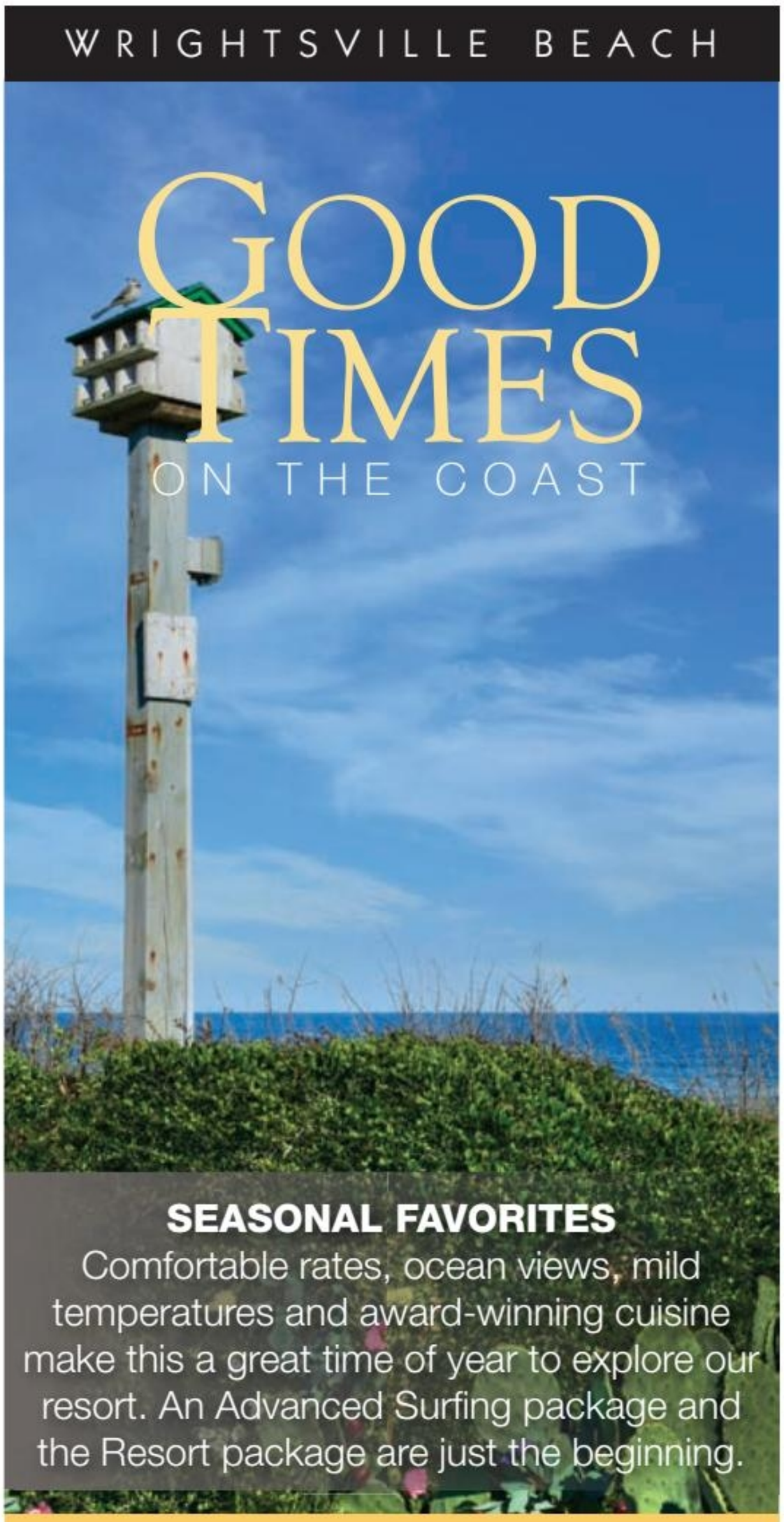
Readers are left to decide if the suffering was worth it. The survivors may have thought so when they were received as heroes. Celebrated and roundly lauded in the press, honored with a parade, promoted in grade and awarded medals, they basked in the limelight. But not long after they had settled into their new lives, rumors of cannibalism materialized. Greely and the other survivors denied any knowledge of such an outrage, but a medical examination of at least one of the corpses revealed that flesh had been removed from the bones with a cutting implement.

It may be that our general lack of knowledge of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition is the result of these lingering accusations — after all, we've never forgiven the Donner Party — and only in recent years have books on Greely's Arctic adventure seen publication. Three of these books, *Ghosts of Cape Sabine, Frozen in Time and Abandoned*, have helped raise awareness among readers of popular histories, and a PBS *American Experience* documentary, "The Greely Expedition," has attracted attention, but we live in a moment when yesterday's news is ancient history and the majority of Americans can't tell you where the Grand Canyon is located.

A plethora of recent books detailing other desperate Arctic and Antarctic expeditions have come to constitute a "desperate polar rescue" subgenre. *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*, a beautifully written history of a 1914 attempt to reach the South Pole, has received much critical attention, and the lifeboat Shackleton used to navigate the stormy waters from Antarctica to the Falkland Islands has toured museums around the country. But Shackleton's Expedition had a happy outcome; every member of the *Endurance* crew survived. Nineteen of Greely's command died in order to achieve the most ephemeral of objectives.

If you have a grim fascination with self-inflicted suffering in inhospitable environs, you can always revel in TV's *Life Below Zero, Ultimate Survival Alaska, Dual Survival, Naked and Afraid*, or, this reviewer's favorite series title, *Dude, You're Screwed*. There's no denying that the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition suffered unimaginable horrors — and there was no "tapping out" when they found themselves trapped in the Arctic. How silly and shallow reality TV programs seem when compared to the *real* reality of the Greely Expedition.

Stephen E. Smith is a retired professor and the author of seven books of poetry and prose. He's the recipient of the Poetry Northwest Young Poet's Prize, the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Prize for poetry and four North Carolina Press awards.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Songs of Home

The Steep Canyon Rangers celebrate the music of the Old North State

By Wiley Cash · Photographs by Mallory Cash

What do you do after spending several weeks playing sold-out shows across Australia, some of them with Steve Martin and Martin Short? If you are the Steep Canyon Rangers, you come back to North Carolina and play a lunchtime show inside a strip-mall record store in Raleigh. If you are the Steep Canyon Rangers you even carry your own equipment through the front door and snake your way through the crowd on the way to the stage.

There were no crowds when I arrived nearly an hour or so before the noon show on a chilly Wednesday in early December. The Steep Canyon Rangers had just released their latest album, *North Carolina Songbook*, which they had recorded live at Merlefest in April. The album is a celebration of North Carolina music, featuring the band's renditions of the work of some of North Carolina's most foundational voices, including Thelonious Monk, Doc Watson, Elizabeth Cotton and James Taylor. The album was released on the Friday after Thanksgiving, a day that many music lovers have come to revere as National Record Store Day Black Friday. In support of the album, the Rangers had decided to play record stores, starting with School Kids Records in Raleigh.

If you want to feel uncool, I invite you to visit an independent record store that sits a stone's throw from a university campus.

"VIPs only down front," says the record store manager from behind the bar. I call it a bar because while it is a counter where you can pay for records and merchandise, it is also a bar in that beer is served from behind it.

"I'm friends with the band," I say. He knits his brows as if he has heard this hundreds of times over the years from lame dads like me. But it is the truth. I went to college with mandolin player Mike Guggino, and I have written about the band and gotten to know them over the years.

I decide to try another tack. "I'm with the media," I say, which is also true. After all, you are right now reading the media story I wrote, but this was not enough for the manager.

"You have to purchase an album to be a VIP," he says.

"That's it?" I ask. "I was going to do that anyway."

"Great," he says, not smiling. "You can be a VIP."

As the clock crawls closer to noon, the store begins to fill to capacity with a mixed crowd that ranges from college students to retirees. Someone has ordered pizza. Beers are being passed from the bar back through the crowd.

"Do a lot of bands play here?" a middle-aged woman asks the manager.

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"A couple times a month," he says. He looks around. "But nothing like this."

I hear someone say my name, and I turn to find Graham Sharp, one of the band's vocalists, carrying his guitar case and pushing through the crowd. I say hello to him and pray that the record store manager has seen us greet one another by name.

The rest of the band streams in behind Sharp, each of them carrying an assortment of instruments. The band takes the small stage, nearly filling it. The room is warm and pleasant; everyone clearly happy to be out of the office or skipping class in favor of live music from one of North Carolina's most famous bands.

"Hey, y'all," Sharp says to the audience. "These are songs we recorded at Merlefest." The crowd cheers at the mention of the iconic festival. "But we haven't played them since April."

"We relearned them on the way here," says lead vocalist Woody Platt to the audience's laughter. And then the band is off into a rollicking version of Charlie Poole's "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down," Platt's rich baritone playing a wonderful historical opposite to Poole's higher pitch.

The event soon takes on the feel of a college keg party, a feel that is intimately familiar to the Steep Canyon Rangers. The band was co-founded by Sharp and Platt at UNC-Chapel Hill in the late '90s, when both were undergraduates. They released their first album in 2001, and they have released 13 albums since then, a few in collaboration with Steve Martin.

"This new album is a homecoming for us," Platt later tells the audience. "We released our first record with Yep Roc Records, and that's who's just released *North Carolina Songbook*."

And what a homecoming. The album is not only a celebration of famous North Carolina musicians and their music; it is also a testament to the Steep Canyon Rangers' ability to blend and bend genres and styles while making a cover song seem like their own.

The band moves through gorgeous covers of Thelonious Monk's "Blue Monk," Tommy Jerrell's "Drunkard's Hiccups," Ola Belle Reed's "I've Endured," Elizabeth Cotton's "Shake Sugaree," closing out the set with the state's beloved James Taylor's "Sweet Baby James," sung by bassist Barrett Smith, a longtime friend of the band who is the newest addition.

At the close of the show, Platt sets down his guitar and tells the audience that the band will hang around for a little "shake and howdy," but they have to get over to Chapel Hill for a mic check. They are singing the national anthem at the Dean Dome before tonight's Tar Heels game against Ohio State. A homecoming indeed, but while so much has changed for the Steep Canyon Rangers, shows like the one at the record store prove that so little about them has.

Wiley Cash lives in Wilmington with his wife and their two daughters. His latest novel, The Last Ballad, *is available wherever books are sold.*

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A Voice in the Storm

When information saves lives

By Dana Sachs

Amy McLane: Community Organizer

Right before Hurricane Florence hit our area in 2018, you and several others started a Facebook page that's now called Wilmington NC/Cape Fear Hurricane Recovery and Preparedness. The page has grown to 7,700 members and become an important local resource. What inspired you to create it?

It started before Florence with me making a list of everything I needed to do and feeling a tremendous sense of anxiety. At one point, Florence was a Category Four hurricane, and it was really frightening. I learned where to get information, which would be the best news sources. I downloaded emergency alerts. I located a bunch of municipal websites where I could get information during the storm. I put all this information into a big list, and I thought, "I'm going to post this information on Facebook." Then, one of my friends said, "This could be useful to other people. You ought to start a page to share hurricane information." I said, "I don't have time to set up a page. I'm getting ready for a hurricane." So five of us — Leslie Hudson, Veronica Carter, Joanne Levitan, Alice Melott and I — teamed up. Pretty soon, we started to get dozens, and then hundreds, of requests to join.

What need did it fill?

I think it served as an information hub, first in Florence and then in Dorian. Unlike, for example, the municipal websites, people could ask us and each other questions here. They could talk about their own experiences with others in their own community, which I think they found comforting. We were going through the same things and lived in the same places they did, which was the three counties of Brunswick, Pender and New Hanover.

How well did the page work the first time, during Florence?

You can feel really isolated during a storm, especially when all the traditional communication goes down. During the height of it, people would ask each other, "What are you experiencing?" In Florence, we lost cell service in Wilmington for a while, but two of the site's administrators had evacuated, so they could still follow the news and provide information.

It must have taken a lot of time to keep the site functioning.

It did, but it gave me something to do. Once you get your

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preparations done, you're waiting. When the storm came, I would sleep for a couple of hours, then wake up and check on the page, get rid of stuff that had become dated. And then, in the immediate aftermath, you almost become like a reporter. People would ask, "Is your power out?" "Have you gotten your power back on?" And then people started asking each other how to get back home. Where can you find things? Where can you find gas? Is there a grocery store open yet? What are the lines like?

You've said that you want the site to function through four stages of a storm: "Getting Ready," "Landfall," "Immediate Aftermath," and "Planning for a Better Outcome Next Time." How do we plan for a better outcome next time?

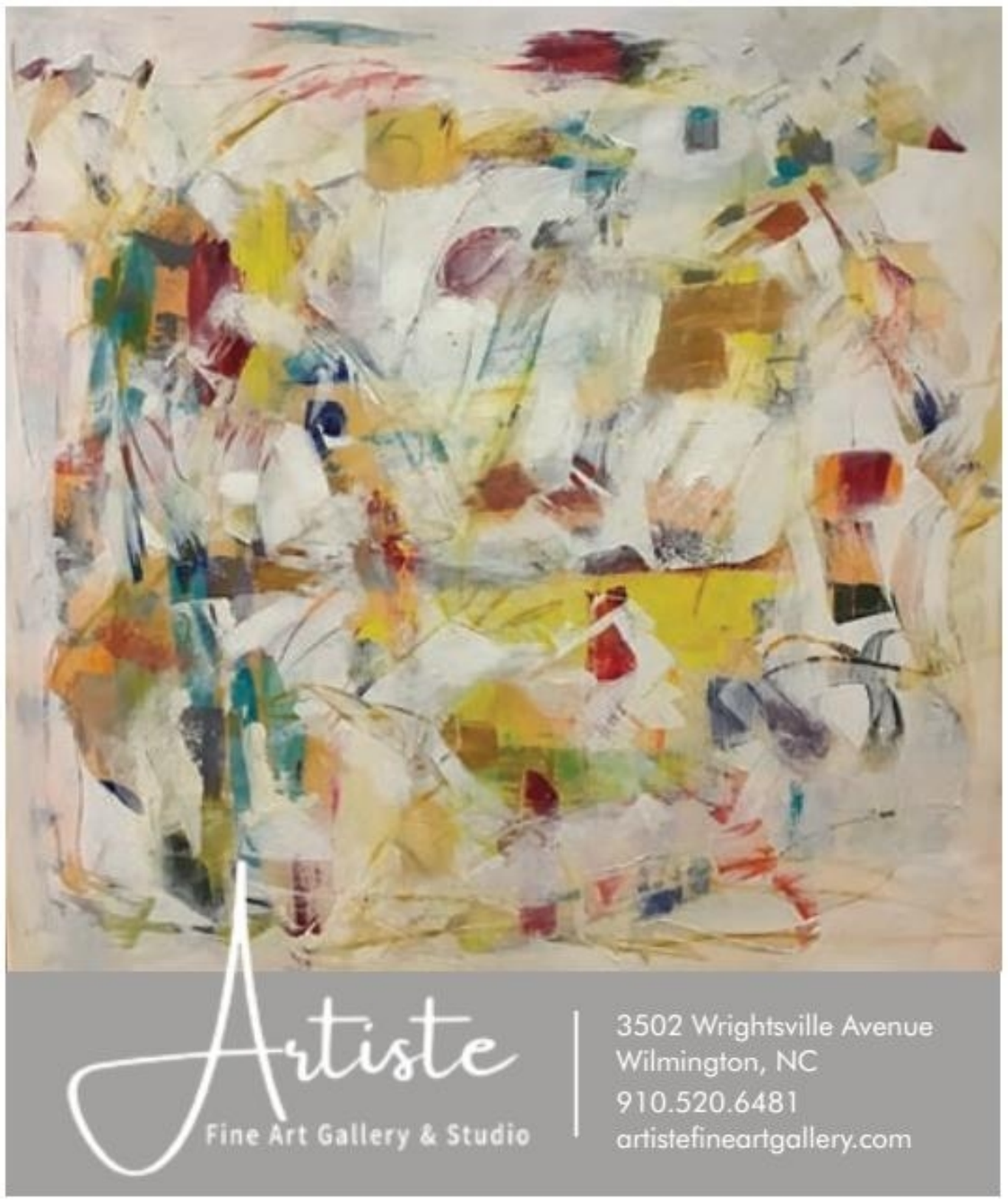
For a lot of people, Florence isn't over. I still have neighbors who aren't back in their houses yet. How a community responds to a storm tells us about that community. What does it mean to be resilient? What do we need to do so that next time a storm comes the impact won't be as severe, the cost won't be as high, the pain that people suffered won't be as great? That conversation is going on all over the community now. The Facebook page is a way to take part in that conversation.

What kinds of ideas are people discussing?

I'm particularly sensitive to this because I'm a civil engineer by profession. People are talking about flooding. Nuisance flooding. Flooding after heavy rainstorms. And they're making that connection to infrastructure, development patterns, impervious surfaces. Ten or 15 years go by without a bad storm event and people have the luxury of not thinking about those things. Often, you don't know where the weaknesses are until a big storm comes. Once you know those weaknesses, what do you do about it?

Are people starting to pay more attention to infrastructure?

Every community struggles with having adequate funds to build, upgrade and maintain infrastructure. Wilmington has the challenges of an older city with an



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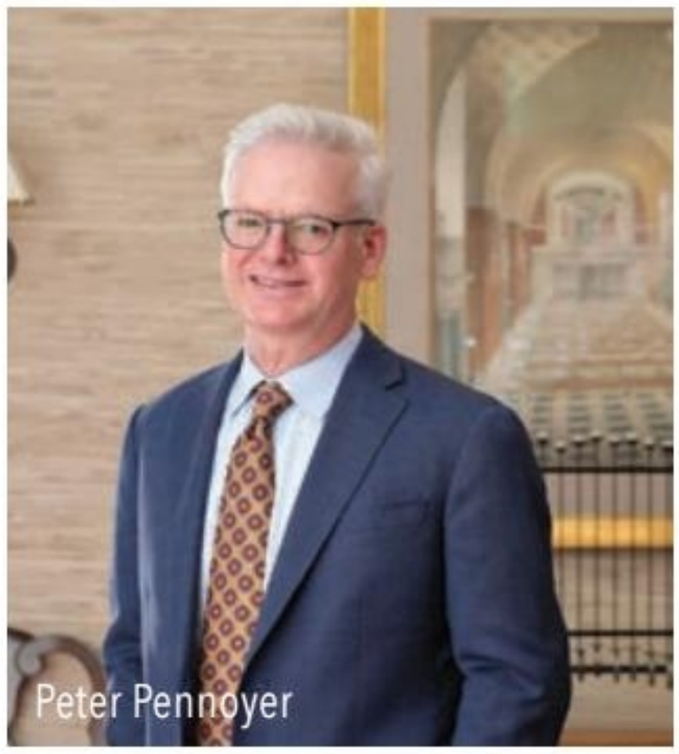
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aging infrastructure. At the same time, our population is growing a lot. And so that infrastructure is seeing increased use and stress. Every additional square foot of impervious surface — like parking lots — adds to those challenges. Ten acres of woods doesn't generate any tax revenue or income, but it provides stormwater services that cost nothing. The hurricanes and their impacts really highlighted those issues.

To a large extent, your Facebook page is crowdsourcing public safety information.

Some public safety information, but also practical stuff, like when's the trash pickup going to start again?

What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this kind of a model?

As a civil engineer, I think of safety as a huge issue. We are careful on the page to tell people that we are not a substitute for emergency management. We're going to share public safety information, but if you have an issue, you need to go to them. We're just a group of people living in the community. We share information from the experts. We only used weather information from the National Weather Service, the National Hurricane Center, and local meteorologists. There's all kinds of amateurs out there who do weather predictions. Some of those folks are really good. Some are just trying to make money. The more they try to frighten, the more people look at their page.

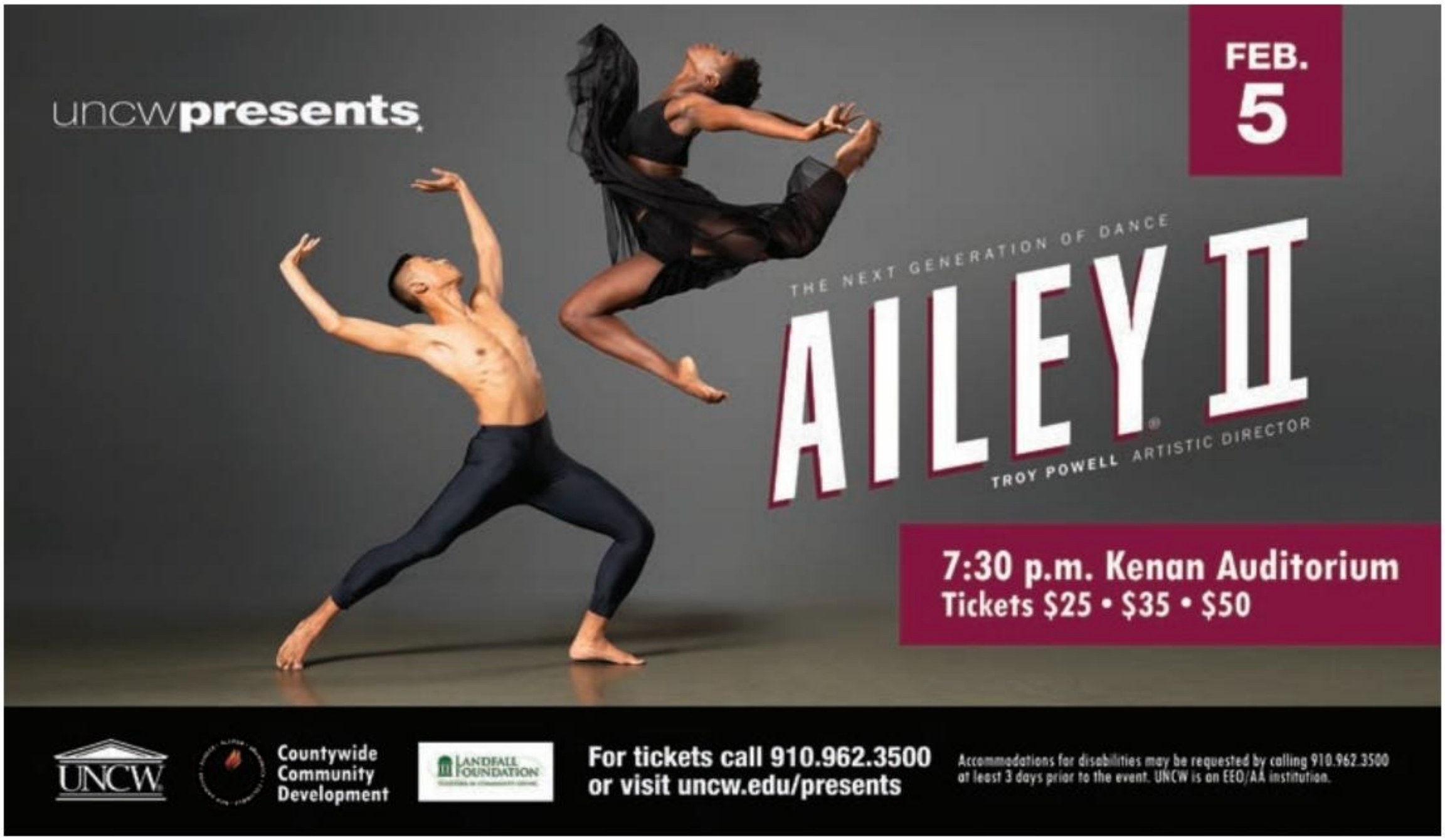
Has the frequency of hurricanes affected your feelings about living here?

I feel more connected to the community as a result of going through the storms, but I also am worried about the risk. My whole extended family lives in Wilmington.

What will you do if another storm comes our way?

Probably the same thing I did with Dorian. I just started posting again. I had people tell me that they didn't feel so alone.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*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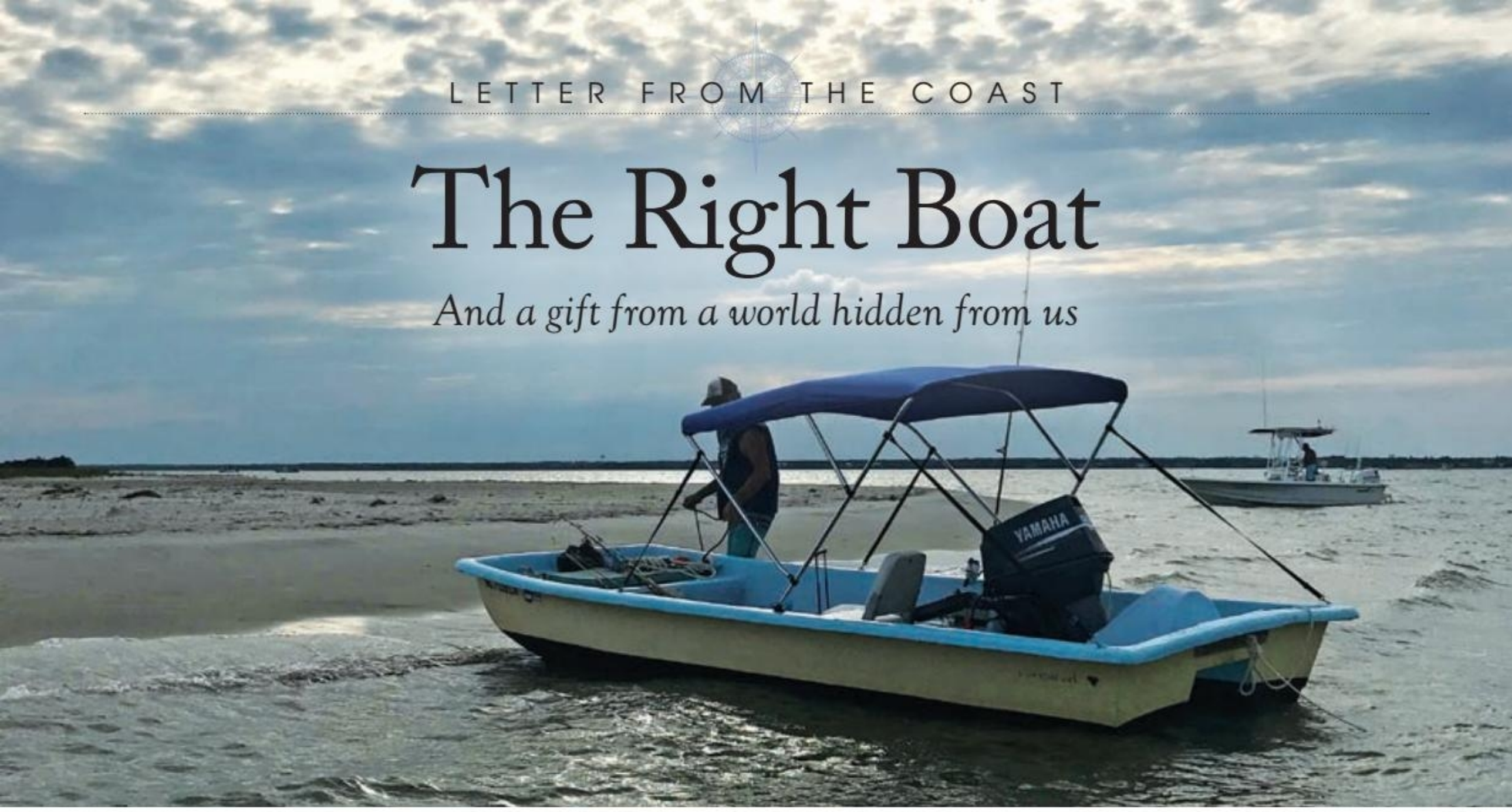

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARK HOLMBERG

By Mark Holmberg

I almost bought the wrong boat.

As most coastal Carolinians will tell you, that's an easy thing to do. In fact, some may say any boat you buy is the wrong one. Being able to use a friend's . . . now that's the right boat! But by early spring we decided we must have our own. For health reasons, mind you.

You see, almost every night for 32 years I had an adrenaline bath. We're talking heart-racing, gut-wrenching, brain-sweating, don't-know-if-I'm-going-to-make-it terror. For 21 of those years, I was a night reporter and columnist for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in Virginia, famous for immersing myself in the city's grit and stretching deadlines past the 1 a.m. breaking point. Then came 11 years as a night reporter and columnist for CBS-6 in Richmond, often shooting and editing my reports right up to the very last second of their 11 p.m. broadcast. Then you sweat over whether you got the story right.

During those three decades I helped raise four children, often laying bricks in my off time because a reporter's salary couldn't support my family. I could get by on three or four hours of sleep and frequently did. I have no idea how I survived it. (Or my poor editors, for that matter.)

But when I first visited Wilmington and its neighboring beaches in 2013, I immediately realized I had to move to this coast or die. The cure for all those cumulative adrenaline baths, I immediately discovered, is Carolina salt water. I imagine it's the cure for many other ailments, given the number of folks who are so absolutely compelled to be in or around it.

It took four years to wind down my career while buying and rehabbing a house in downtown Wilmington. Thus began a loving and healing exploration of our amazing seashores. My first mate, Lady Je, and I have walked almost every single island and cape from Myrtle Beach to the Outer Banks. We have fished them, swum them, tried-to-surf them (I can't yet call what I do "surfing"), shelled them, cooked on those that allow grilling, and bicycled them at low tide with fishing poles bungeed aboard so we could stop where the pelicans are and cast out.

We bought beach-driving passes for Freeman Park, Fort Fisher and Emerald Isle. We have savored all of it in all weathers and met so many others — good, sweet souls — doing the same thing. The adventures we've had!

A bit more than a year after my 2017 retirement, I could actually feel myself awakening. I found myself breathing — really breathing — for the first time in my adult life. I've increasingly been able to sit and relax, to be calm and quiet. To truly see, smell, taste, hear and feel the world as it is in that moment, instead of racing through it, trying to shape it to my will, always moving restlessly like a shark.

But we could see all the other healing wonders we were missing — thousands of miles of sounds, estuaries, creeks, rivers and island preserves — because we didn't have a boat to reach them.

But what kind?

Our explorations included walking many of the countless marinas in this briny state. It's wild how many million-dollar boats there are, capable of racing out into the ocean to challenge the big fish. And everywhere you turn is a new or almost-new $40,000-plus beauty with all the cool accessories.

But the coin of the realm are skiffs and jon boats, which can navigate this coast's shallow waters. So much of this state's almost endless waterways are knee-deep to an egret at low tide, impenetrable to any other kind of craft.

I had decided on a net boat, or well boat, as they are called. The outboard motor doesn't hang on the transom at the back of the boat, but

sits forward in a well, so you can haul nets or crab pots in at the back of the boat. It also enables the boat to travel flatly for better navigation of the shallows.

The wrong boat was a big well boat, an old salt that had crabbed and netted the shallows of Queens Creek by Swansboro for a generation. It had a good 100-horsepower Suzuki motor but was missing the steering controls and other essentials. It sat heavily on a worn-out trailer, all for $3,500.

I admired the young man who owned it. He is a commercial fisherman and had worked that boat most of his life. He had downsized to a smaller well boat. The price was right. The motor alone was worth that. But the gunwales were high, which would make it hard to get in and out of it when we hit the beaches and sandbars. It needed a newer, bigger trailer and lots of work. (I later learned that Queens Creek was deeper during this boat's heyday. Bottlenecking this tidal estuary during the construction of Queens Creek Bridge has caused it to silt up.)

I was strongly considering buying it when Lady Je showed me an online listing for another net boat not far away that had just come up for sale. It's a 17-foot Diamond, a durable work boat made in Snead's Ferry. It still had its commercial fishing license, a nice 60-horsepower Yamaha, a fresh steel prop and a healthy trailer. It was the right boat, with low-rolled gunwales and everything turnkey: lights, life jackets, a whistle, even a full tank of gas. The owner, one of our ferry captains, looked us over and decided we were the right people for the right boat. Without asking, he lowered the price to an irresistible $3,000.

We call it the Sanford and Son boat. Parked next to newer, much

pricier boats on the islands and shorelines we visit, it looks quite shabby. But it is frequently complimented as the right boat. We have launched it from a score of North Carolina's sweet boat ramps. We have explored long stretches of the White Oak River, Queens Creek and Bear Creek. We've gone several times to the amazing Cape Lookout, one time absolutely swarmed by big pole-bending blues and Spanish mackerel that were practically leaping into the boat.

We've explored a good bit of the Intracoastal Waterway and have fallen in love with Bear Island, an oceanfront state preserve beside Emerald Isle, not far from the Swansboro fishing shack we bought and started rehabbing as a retirement project.

We frequently have the lower end to ourselves, making the shelling

the best we've encountered. (Except the days after Hurricane Florence on Wrightsville Beach. That was epic.)

Recently, Lady Je and I boated there on a calm, sunny day and went for a long walk. We had the entire beach to ourselves. The calmness made for poor shelling, but it was all oh-so-soothing. I walked out knee-deep into the low tide shallows and found a sweet little underwater plain rich in treasures.

In just a few minutes I found a murex, a whole moon snail, a nice knobbed whelk, two sand dollars and . . . what is that?! It was a strange, creepy kind of shadow on the wave-riffled sand. I had to steel myself a bit to pick it up to see what it was.

A whalebone as big as a basketball! An intact vertebra! I knew our biggest backbones are about the size of a fist. I could imagine the size and age of the whale and marveled that this one bone (whales have seven vertebrae and many other bones) would be waiting for me months or years after he or she died.

I know it sounds corny, but I felt a kind of spiritual rush, a connection to this big creature and its vast world hidden from most of us. I waved Lady Je over, and we searched that stretch for any other bones until the tide deepened and the sun reached for the sea.

We walked back and loaded up the lone bone into the right boat and eased back through the tricky channel leading to the Intracoastal, knowing how lucky we are to live on this ever-shifting coast.

Mark Holmberg was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 2003. He started writing for Salt *in 2013, most recently under the guise of Spencer Compton, First Earl of Wilmington. He lives in Swansboro.*

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Just a Cup

A memoir served with hot coffee

By Martin Brown

I spent spring break of my final year of college in the wreckage of my late grandparents' home. I was digging through decades of garbage in order to save the memories that lay amid the refuse; I spent hours on my knees sorting through broken dishware; I pulled old glasses out of piles of filth and animal eggs; I became sick from breathing dirty air; and I would do it all again. As I'm writing this, I'm drinking out of a coffee cup which is more than twice my age, and if you give me a moment, I'll tell you why.

When VE day happened and World War II was coming to an end, James "Leroy" Brown was lying in a field hospital with his head containing several, newly added, pieces of shrapnel. His helmet had been punctured by fast-moving bomb shards, some of which lodged in his head (he was a quiet fella, but God help anyone who called him empty-headed from there on out). He had a few small pieces of metal added to his head and, for his trouble, he'd soon have another piece pinned to his chest.

The shrapnel failed to do any serious damage, and Leroy was on the verge of being sent back to the front when he got news that fighting was going to stop. Now, I can't tell you what was said in those moments. I can't tell you what went through the head of the man whose head was making a nasty habit of having things go through it, but I can tell you one thing: He didn't want to forget.

He wanted to remember those days and all they meant. This is evidenced by the fact that he kept that helmet after his friends snuck into the garbage and saved the thing that saved their buddy. Ruined beyond hope of use, that helmet was thrown out twice, and twice it was saved.

Today, it sits on a stand looking down from my father's bookcase, watching as the child of its former owner, who wouldn't have been born without that helmet, does his work, or scrolls on his phone, or falls asleep at the computer. An old helmet gathering dust, but also, maybe, still protecting something.

We entered the drooping little house wearing surgical gloves and masks. The air was heavy with dust and decay. In spite of our precautions, I ended up violently ill following the trip. The house had been standing since just after the war, when my grandfather came home with nothing but a head full of metal and the promise of work at a nearby textile mill.

He got that job at the mill. He walked into that building every workday for 50 years. But less than one year into those 50 he found he had something else: a brother with a girlfriend, and the girlfriend had a cousin (a little spitfire named Mary Alice Poole), and the brother and the girlfriend thought they'd get on fine.

Then, two years into the 50, they built the ranch house at the bottom of the hill, Leroy and that little spitfire, who was now his wife. And in 2019, three grandchildren and two sons walked into what used to be that pretty little house, where several decades of history sat mingling under dust and debris.

The house was devastated, and overgrown. It had been only three years since my grandmother passed, but it had already been in bad shape, and an empty house can't stand. In the back room, which once housed my infant father, a piece of ceiling had caved in, leaving a hole that led out onto the roof. This hole had become a port of entry for raccoons and other animals seeking to reclaim the little patch of land, and whatever else they could get hold of. We brought in garbage bags for the things that were undesirable or ruined, and plastic bins for the memories.

Leroy Brown never met a cup of coffee too dark. As I walked in with my travel mug—the Leroy special: Coffee. Black. Nothing fancy—I noticed some of my grandmother's tins of loose-leaf tea. They made me think of the ones I had at home and of Chinese tea ceremonies. Of traditional clay pots being used to make the same tea day in and day out until the clay soaks in so much flavor that, provided hot water, it will produce tea, even without leaves in the pot.

Walking around in that house felt like standing in a teapot that had been filled time and again with love and laughter but which now sat empty. We were there to drink it in one last time. To see what flavor remained.

We found stacks of *National Geographic* magazines going back decades, forming a more complete collection than most libraries. We found a map of Disney World from the 1970s when the park was new. We found childish drawings, college-bound notebooks, and wedding china.

As we dug through the contents of the house, we held up things for each other to see: a silent question. We deferred to the memories of my father and uncle, who would lean back, wipe a brow and reminisce in

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response to the call of, "Is this important?" We each made piles of things we claimed, and the rest was split simply into garbage and not.

Being the youngest there, I tried to do my share of the lifting and crawling around. I stumbled across countless forgotten things no longer serving whatever purpose they originally had. One such item was a small bit of metal which looked not unlike a handheld stapler; what it actually was I had no idea. In the moment, I saved it only because it looked unique, and I'm glad I did.

It's sitting on my desk now. The device is made up of a lever which, when squeezed, applies pressure to a couple of round plates a little larger than a silver dollar. I'm holding it now as I held it then. On the day I found it, after being told what it might be, I asked the others for a scrap of paper and, when finally we managed to find one, I slid it into the mouth of the little thing. As I squeezed, I could hear the paper whine as it stretched and wrinkled. Then I pulled it out and looked.

"MARY ALICE BROWN - NOTARY PUBLIC - SOUTH CAROLINA"

The seal formed a circle. In the center in larger print was the title, while my grandmother's name and the name of her state encircled it as a border. It reminded me of something that would be coated in gold in the bottom corner of a diploma.

Looking at that seal was as good as seeing my grandmother, young and beautiful, behind her desk, surrounded by the stacks of paper that she combed through dutifully. The little device is sturdy, reliable and capable in spite of the years. In it I see the woman whose name it bears.

I don't recall ever hearing Mary Alice Poole Brown ask for help, and I certainly don't recall seeing her fail. Whether it was at the offices where she worked, in spite of massive workloads and the occasional "coffee girl" joke; the church where she served as a clerk; or in her personal life, Mary Alice Brown was the sort to do the job till it was done and to smile when she handed it in.

My grandparents lived through difficult times and, like many who went through the same, they developed difficulty in letting things go. The precious memories mixed with the everyday, and slowly the little house gained a not-so-little load.

We found stacks of paper cups that had

been rinsed and saved, food containers reused and long-spoiled, and broken knick-knacks that "someone may still want." It was difficult at times to decide what should stay and what should go.

In case you don't quite see the problem, I present to you a stack of papers, tattered and yellow. Garbage or not? They clearly were once a book, and beside them under the remains of my uncle's childhood bed, lies the faded cover, which faintly reads: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*, by Lewis Carroll.

Mary Alice was a voracious reader. The way Leroy could devour pots of black coffee, so would she devour books. So, no granddaughter of hers was going to grow up without learning to love reading. When her eldest grandchild (my cousin) came to play, she would call her over and pull her onto her lap as she pulled out some book filled with mystery and wonder.

If you try, I'm sure you can see it. The girl in her grandmother's lap marveling at the old book's silly words and talking animals. If you really try, you can see further, to a bookish little spitfire of a girl on Christmas morning with a book, bright and new, still with the smell of fresh pages. Two little girls learning to love reading from the same slow-tattering pages.

Sit there a moment with that book. Watch Mary Alice sipping some tea and taking a break from her own Agatha Christie to gain a potential future addition to her book club.

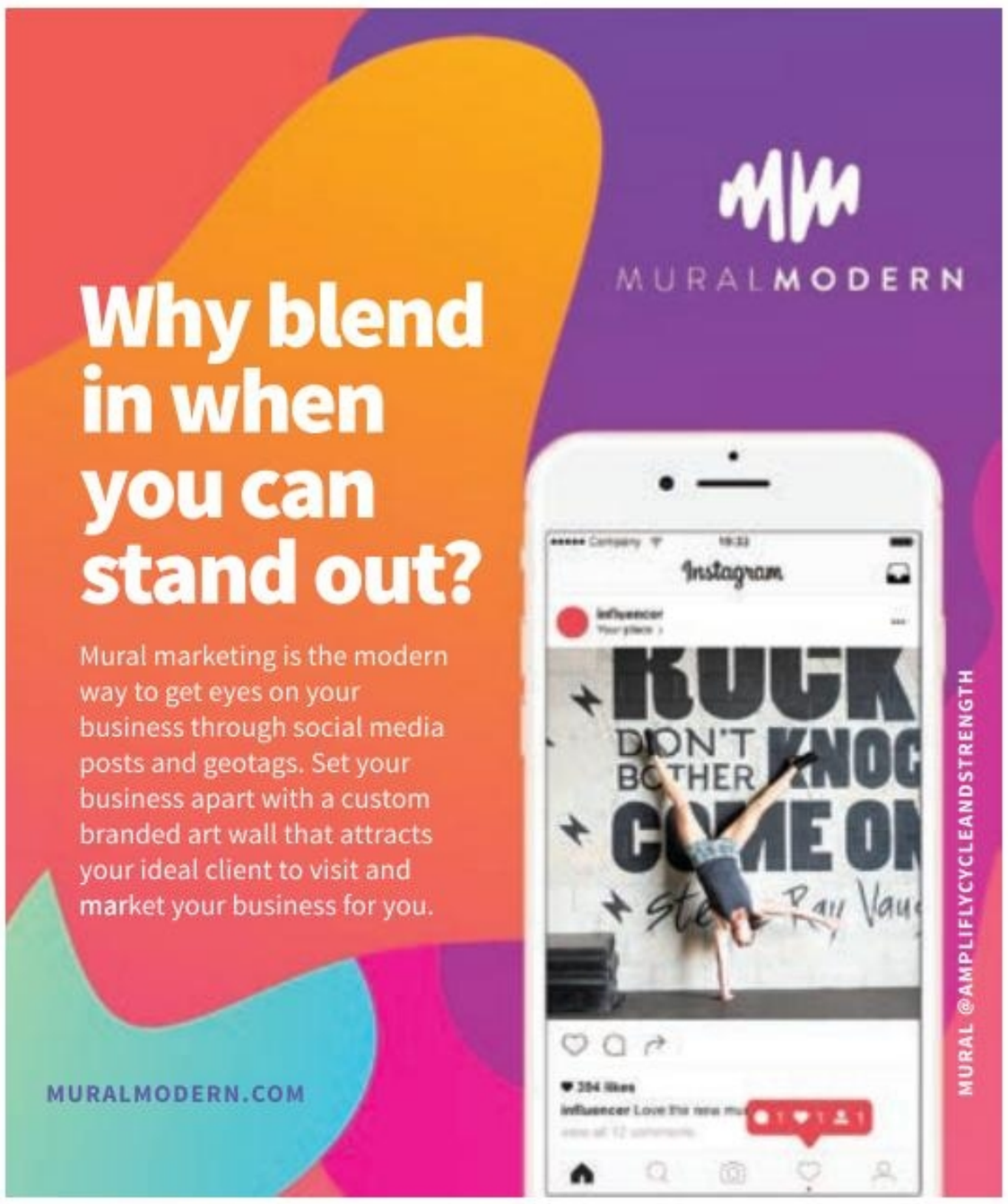
I handed the pages to my cousin, without knowing what they meant, the pages with the inscription "Mary Alice Poole, December 25, 1936." Mary Alice's trick had worked. I've known few people who love words as fiercely as my cousin. Today she is an editor, and her husband a writer. The book was little more than mildewy pages, as removed from that moment 30 years ago, as my cousin likely felt. She stood a moment, transfixed, and I suggested that she could find some of the more preserved pages and frame them under a photo of our grandmother. She was flipping through the old leaves without really looking at them when I saw tears fall. She left the room and none of us followed. We had garbage bags to fill.

I promised you at the beginning of all this that I would explain why I drink out of an old cup. When I write, it's my grandfather's old Army green coffee cup, the short, bowl-shaped one from the set they bought when they first took to living in that little ranch house. When I edit, it's my grandmother's souvenir mug from Myrtle Beach or the one that reads "Best secretary. Not a coffee girl."

When I hold the mug that held my grandmother's tea during reading time, or that she took her coffee in before work—when I feel the warmth of the drink seeping into my fingers—I soak up more than heat. But it isn't from the cup.

When a man looks up from his desk at his father's helmet, or a woman stands holding some old papers that used to be a book, maybe that feeling in their chest isn't coming from the thing. Maybe a relic is just a relic. As I stand here holding Mary Alice's mug, there is a piece of her here. But it isn't in the mug. It's in me.

Martin Brown was born in Winston-Salem and received a degree in writing from UNCW. A writer of narrative nonfiction, he collects coffee mugs.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Swamp Sparrow

Watch for this lovely forager in the shallows

By Susan Campbell

To most folks, especially non-birders, a sparrow is just a sparrow. A small brown bird with varying amounts of streaking and a stubby little bill: not very impressive. However, in coastal North Carolina and especially in winter, nothing could be further from the truth. Although only one sparrow species can readily be found during the breeding season in our area, we have 10 different kinds that regularly spend the cooler months here. These range in size from the husky fox sparrow down to the diminutive chipping sparrow. Without a doubt, my favorite in this group is the swamp sparrow, whose handsome appearance and unique adaptations make it a definite standout.

At this time of the year, these medium-size sparrows are a warm brown above, with black streaking like so many others. But swamps have a significant amount of chestnut apparent in the wings. The gray face and dark eye-line and crown streak contrast sharply with the white throat and breast. The tail is fairly long and rounded: a very good rudder for moving around in tight quarters where these birds live.

Not surprisingly and as the bird's name insinuates, it is usually found in wetter habitat year-round. With longer legs than its conspecifics, swamp sparrows readily forage in the shallows, searching not only for fallen seeds and berries but also for aquatic invertebrates. Individual sparrows are even known to flip submerged vegetation with their bills in search of a meal.

The birdsong is a liquid stream of notes that we rarely hear during the cooler months. The call note, however, is very loud and distinctive, and uttered frequently. I hear far more of these birds calling from thick, wet habitat than I see along our coast. Swamp sparrows give themselves away with a metallic "chink." If they are disturbed, they are hesitant to fly — probably due to their excellent camouflage. Instead, these birds usually choose to run from potential danger. They can maneuver deftly through sticks, stems and branches when pursued. If a swamp sparrow does fly, it will not be over a great distance. A leery individual will sail to the nearest perch and survey the source of the disturbance, and then it will quickly vanish into thick vegetation.

Birds of wet areas such as these can be attracted to your yard even if you do not live in a coastal or riparian area. The best bet is that they may show up during spring or fall migration if you can create cover for them. Adding low thick shrubs such as blueberry or gallberry will help. A simple brush pile adjacent to your feeding station may be enough to get their attention. But in order to really up the odds of attracting a few swamp sparrows, consider creating a small wetland garden. A small depression will attract more than just this species: It will provide for a multitude of native critters and can be used to naturally treat (i.e., filter) household wastewater. Water features of all sizes have become a very popular way to increase wildlife on even small properties.

Swamp sparrows have been studied for almost a century. It was one of the first to be banded by ornithologists in the early 1900s. In fact, a banded bird from Massachusetts in October 1937 relocated to central Florida in January 1938, having covered a distance of 1,125 miles. This was some of the earliest data produced on migration of songbirds in the United States.

So the next time you are out walking along the edge of a marshy area or paddling in the shallows, watch and — more importantly — listen for this neat little winter resident. One just may pop into view and treat you with a short look. Then I bet you will understand why I think swamp sparrows are special birds.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted at susan@ncaves.com.

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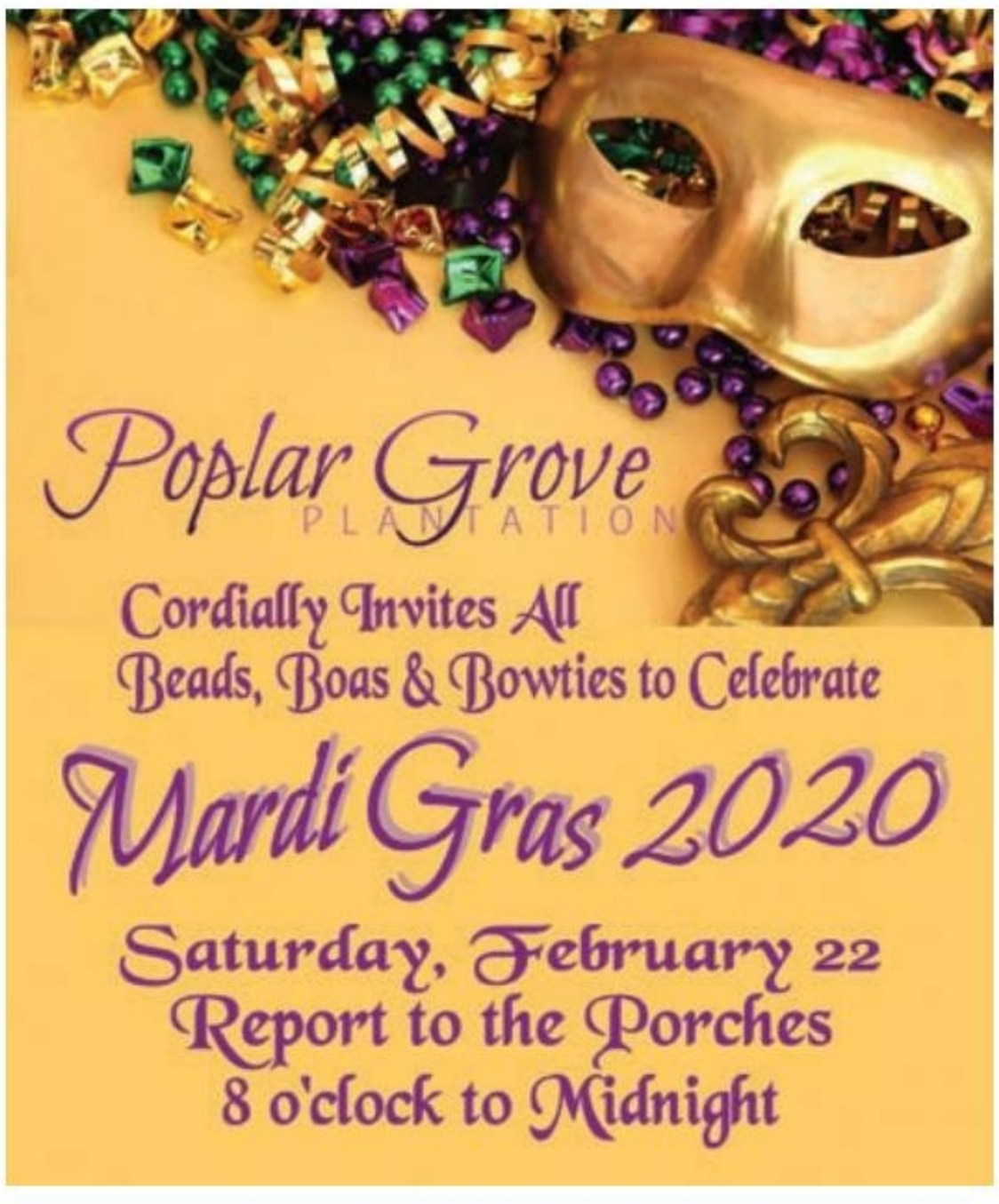
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Musings on Fitness

Do I dare to eat a peach?
- TS Eliot

Calculating carbs and calories,
logging laps in the pool, miles on the bike,
my walks in the woods.

Examining family photos,
genetic code for metabolism that screwed up
our capacity to eat ice cream with impunity.

Questioning the processing of wheat,
golden staff of life,
meant to sustain, not kill us.

Thinking about endless revolutions
on a stationary bike, or the treadmill,
going nowhere but into looser pants, if I'm lucky.

Thousands of folks doing the same, spinning
away, all over the nation. What if we spent
that same energy raking leaves for those

too old to scratch the dirt themselves?
Or building something — a giant calorie-burning
skyscraper, or tap-dancing or waltzing

to make ourselves smile?
Sometimes I am jealous, of my grandparents,
never thin, never fat, farmers

who ate eggs, bacon, and biscuits with molasses,
and never once logged their work in the fields.
I miss their apple pie, MaMa's light yellow pound cake.

Most of all, I miss not fretting about it.

— *Laura Lomax*

A Gift Most Dazzling

The Cameron Art Museum receives a major collection of prints from investment counselor and Wilmington native Louis Belden

Louis Belden's interest in art came later in life. Born in 1926 and raised in Wilmington, he served in the army during World War II and subsequently earned degrees from Harvard and Stanford before launching a successful career as an investment banker — first in New York and then San Francisco, where he was president of Belden & Associates from 1975 to 2012.

Belden began to buy art in New York in the 1950s, with the help of family friend and interior designer Samuel Hudson Hughes. By 1992, Belden's collecting interest was sharply focused on prints — American and European, from 1965 onward. In an interview late in life, he noted: "Those are still my ground rules. I cheat sometimes but not often. And Sam was very helpful in steering me in the right direction, originally, but I often steered myself."

Upon his death in 2017, Belden bequeathed an unprecedented gift to the Cameron Art Museum — a stunning collection of 134 modernist prints by artists ranging from Josef Albers and Alexander Calder to Richard Diebenkorn, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg. And you can see through its breadth and range that Belden developed a curator's connoisseurship in his many years as a collector: "The critical eye, you don't have it initially," said Belden. "The eye learns from experience and it takes time."

"The Eye Learns –Modernist Prints From the Louis Belden Collection." Through April 26th. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. For more information: 910-395-5999.

Helen Frankenthaler (American, 1928-2011) *Aerie*, 2009 Color silkscreen print in 93 colors on paper, ed. 71/128 Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden © 2019 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Judy Chicago (American, 1939)
Flashback, 1965
Color silkscreen, ed. 15/40
Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden
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Alexander Calder (American, 1898-1976) *Blue Sun*, 1971
Color lithograph on arches paper, ed. 83/150
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© 2019 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Sonia Delaunay (Ukrainian, 1885-1979)
Color Rhythms, 1971
Color and aquatint on Arches vellum paper, ed. 13/75
Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden © PRACUSA

Richard Diebenkorn (American, 1922-1993)
Ochre, 1983
Color woodcut on Mitsumata paper, ed. 100/200
Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden © Richard Diebenkorn Foundation

Mario Marini (Italian, 1901-1980)
Plate IV, from *Shakespeare II Portfolio*, (Set of 8), 1978
Color etching with aquatint and drypoint on arches paper, ed. 23/50
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David Hockney (British, 1937)
Pool Made with Paper and Blue Ink, for Paper Pools Deluxe Book, 1980 Lithograph, Trial Proof II
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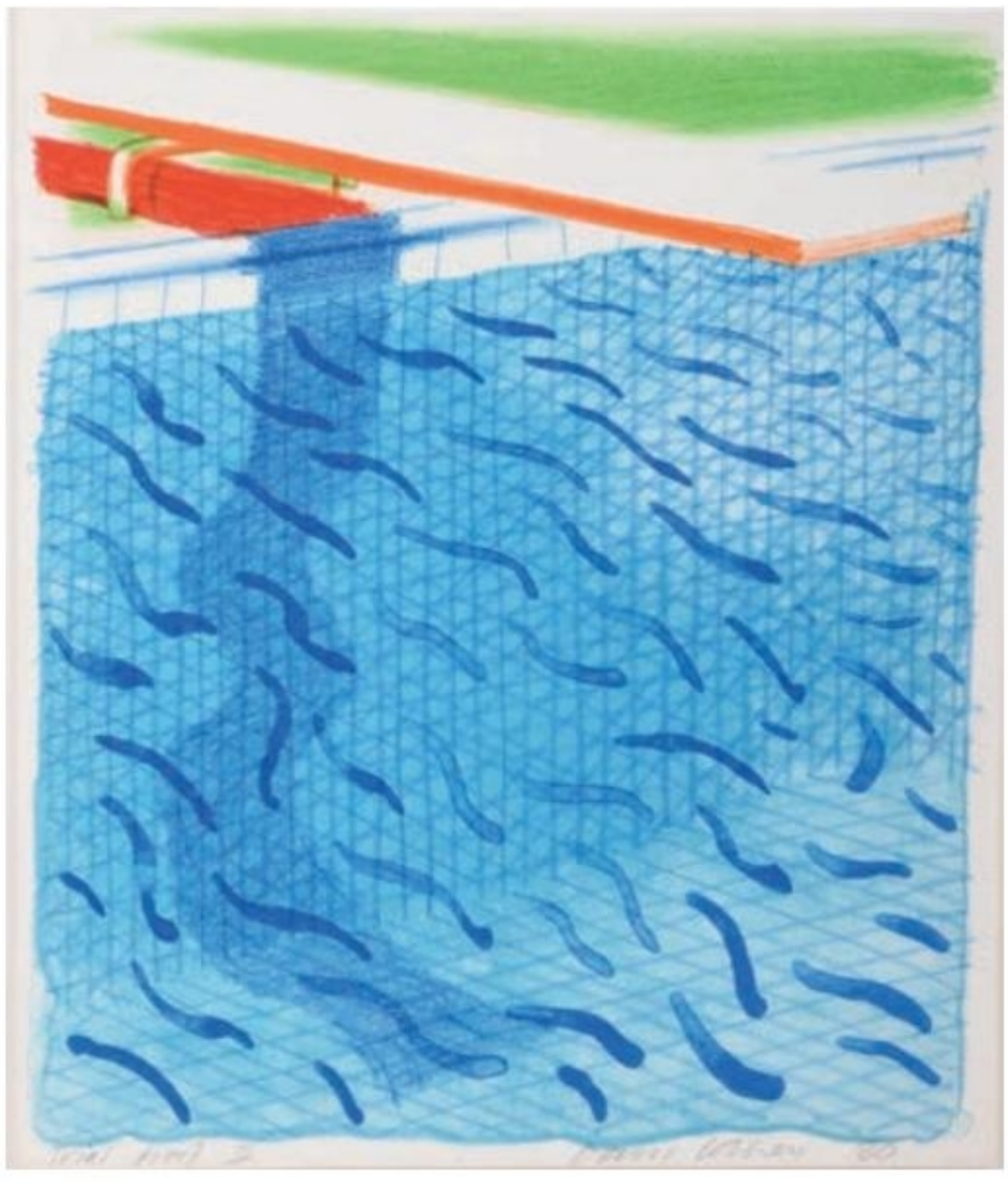
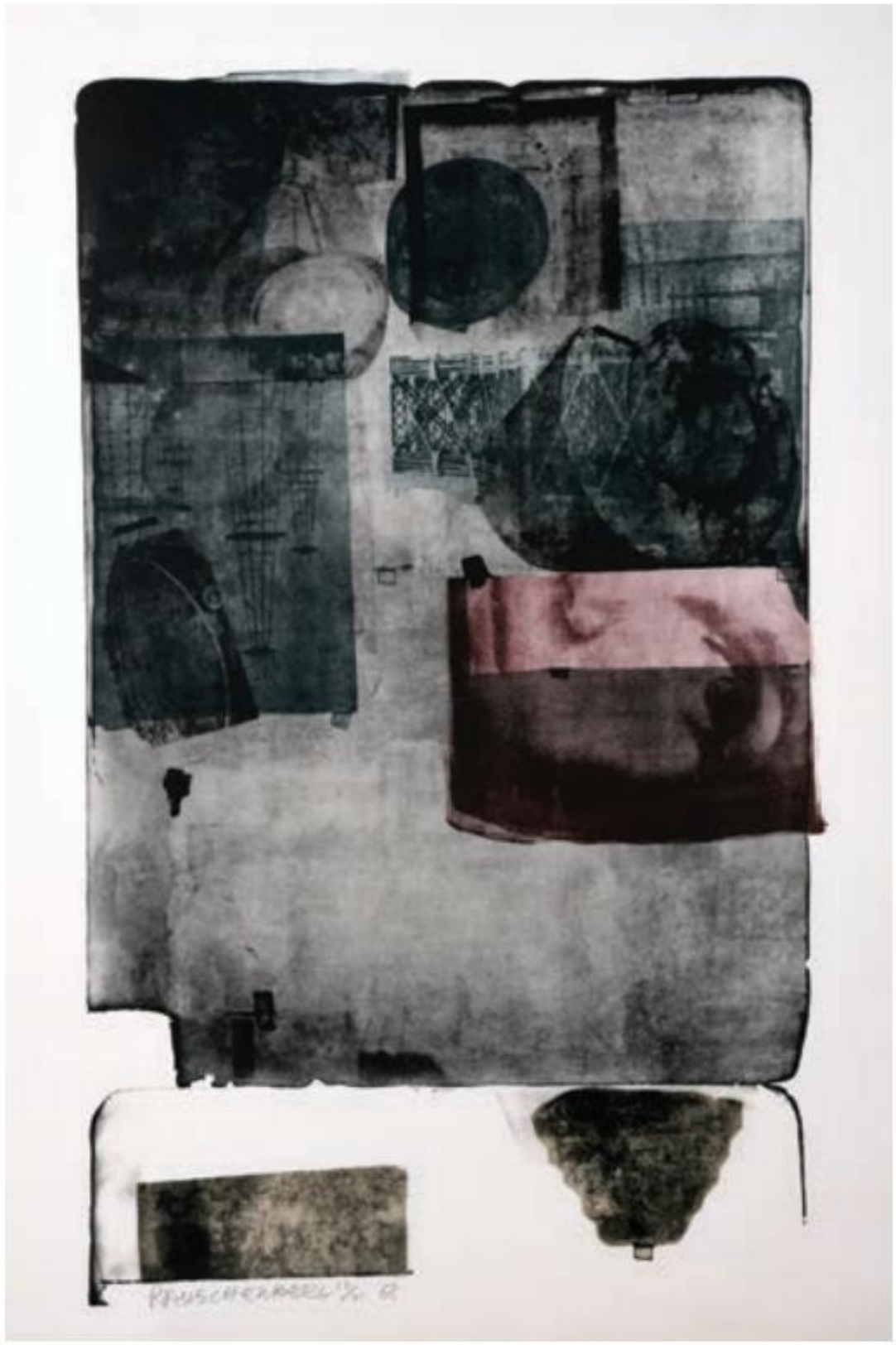


Georges Braque (French, 1882-1963)
Untitled (From the Book *L'Ordre des Oiseaux* published by *Au Vent d'Arles, Paris*), 1962 Color aquatint in black and green on Richard de bas paper, ed. 13/30. Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris



Robert Rauschenberg (American, 1925-2008) *Gamble*, 1968
Color Lithograph, ed. 10/41
Cameron Art Museum: Gift of the estate of Louis Belden © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Wayne Thiebaud (American, 1920)
Display Rows, 1990
Color lithograph, ed. 45/60
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"The Day Was Our Own"

The 1776 Battle of Moores Creek Bridge

One of the most important battles of the Revolution was also the shortest

By Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr.

North Carolina vehicle owners can choose between two license plates with the mottos "First in Flight" or "First in Freedom." The "First in Flight" plate observes the first powered aircraft flights by brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright at Kill Devil Hills on North Carolina's Outer Banks in 1903. The "First in Freedom" plate commemorates in part the Halifax Resolves, the first official written statement in support of independence of any of the 13 American Colonies during the Revolutionary War. It came about as a result of the decisive Patriot victory in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge fought near Wilmington, North Carolina, only six weeks earlier. According to some historians, it turned out to be the shortest battle with the greatest impact in American history.

After its triumph against France and its allies in the global Seven Years War, 1756-1763, Great Britain reorganized its vastly expanded empire. To finance American homeland security and pay down its massive war debt, the government imposed new taxes on the Colonies. The Stamp Act, passed by Parliament in 1765, was the most controversial piece of legislation as it required Colonists to pay a stamp fee on all printed documents and items.

Americans throughout the Colonies resisted, having grown used to taxes passed through their own legislative bodies, which they considered miniature Parliaments. More than just burdensome, the taxes were viewed by the Colonists as violations of their rights as Englishmen, their cry being "no taxation without representation." No American held a seat in Parliament, nor did Parliament consult the Colonies in making changes to its imperial economic policies. One crisis after another slowly but surely fractured the relationship between the American Colonies and the mother country.

First Continental Congress, September 1774, in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

By the summer of 1774, anti-British government activists had gained popularity, strength and support in assuming more control of political affairs in America, including North Carolina. In August the

Josiah Martin, North Carolina's last royal governor

First Provincial Congress of North Carolina, which Patriots formed independent of the Colony's official General Assembly, met in the capital of New Bern to discuss their grievances with Great Britain and Royal Governor Josiah Martin.

Outraged by his subjects' audacity, Gov. Martin banned the shadow government. The Patriots ignored his directive and elected delegates to represent North Carolina at the First Continental Congress that met in Philadelphia in September and October 1774. Representatives from the various Colonies affirmed their political and economic problems with Parliament and agreed to act together to resolve them, in large part by implementing a policy of non-importation and non-consumption of British goods, and the non-exportation of American products to Britain. They also instructed that Committees of Safety, in effect local Patriot governmental bodies, be formed in towns and districts throughout the Colonies, and that militia units muster, organize and train in case of war.

As the political situation worsened in North Carolina, Martin took action to hold onto power. Writing to Gen. Thomas Gage, commander of the British Army in America based in Boston, he requisitioned muskets to arm those loyal to King George III in the Colony. Gage turned down Martin's request, as he had no weapons to spare. Since the fighting between British troops and Massachusetts Minutemen and militia at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, that started the revolution, muskets, ammunition, and gunpowder had become objects of great desire for both American and British armed forces.

Growing fearful for the safety of his family and himself, Gov. Martin sent his wife and children from New Bern to British-controlled New York on May 29, 1775. Unwilling to relinquish his rights as the appointed chief imperial agent in North Carolina, he fled at the same time to Britain's only serviceable and garrisoned fortification in the Colony, Fort Johnston at the mouth of the Cape Fear River (modern Southport). Martin managed to escape from New Bern, but the Patriots soon learned of his whereabouts and kept close tabs on him.

Rumors of a kidnapping plot eventually compelled Martin to seek asylum on board the sloop-of-war *Cruizer*, the only British vessel on duty stationed at the Cape Fear. Seething with anger over the turn of events against him and his government, Martin wrote frequently to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Dartmouth, in London, about an ambitious plan to reassert royal authority in North Carolina by military force. He believed he could assemble a force of at least 3,000 Highland Scot Loyalists who lived in the Upper Cape Fear River Valley in southeastern North Carolina. Since about 1730, immigrants from Scotland, many of them members of the MacDonald and MacLeod clans, had been settling in the area. By most estimates, 15,000 or more Scots resided there by 1775.

To supplement his Loyalist army, Martin asked Lord Dartmouth to send thousands of British troops and 10,000 Brown Bess muskets to arm the civilian recruits. With the large combined force, Martin planned to first restore order in North Carolina and then push into South Carolina and Virginia. An established beachhead against the rebellion in the Carolinas, he trusted, would attract thousands more Loyalists from across the region. Royal governors in other southern Colonies made similar proposals, but Lord Dartmouth, with King George's approval, agreed to Martin's bold strategy.

In early January 1776, Martin issued a printed proclamation requesting Loyalists in North Carolina to muster at Cross Creek (modern Fayetteville). He proffered Maj. Donald MacDonald, a former officer in the British Army and then the Marines, command of the provincial army and a promotion to brigadier general. MacDonald, who had been in North Carolina since the previous summer recruiting for the Royal Highland Regiment of Emigrants for the main army in Boston, accepted the governor's offer.

Martin instructed MacDonald to organize and then march his "powerful division" to Brunswick Town, the principal seaport on the Cape Fear River halfway between Wilmington and Fort Johnston, expecting it to arrive by mid-February. If all went according to plan, 4,500 British soldiers, led by Generals Henry Clinton and Charles Earl Cornwallis, would join them for an invasion of North Carolina by way of the Cape Fear River. Gov. Martin promised each Loyalist enlistee a musket, while King George offered them a bounty of 200 additional acres of land in North Carolina and exemption from quit rent payments for 20 years, providing the Southern campaign proved successful. Although the terms were both generous and enticing, only 1,500 to 1,600 Loyalists appeared at Cross Creek, about half the number Martin anticipated helping him regain control of his lost colony.

The Wilmington-New Hanover County Committee of Safety intercepted Martin's proclamation which clearly revealed his game plan. "Governor Martin at Fort Johnston, it appears, intends erecting a King's Standard, and commencing hostilities against the People of this Province," Patriot leaders warned. They quickly responded by calling on militia units of "Liberty Boys" to rush to the Lower Cape Fear and help turn back the Loyalists before they linked up with the incoming Redcoats.

Col. James Moore, head of the Wilmington Military District, prepared his 1st North Carolina Regiment of about 700 well-trained, professional soldiers to move against the Loyalists. Colonel Alexander Lillington, commander of the Wilmington District Minutemen Battalion, assembled 150 musket-bearers. Col. Richard Caswell, a member of both the Continental Congress and North Carolina's Provincial Congress, recruited about 650 militiamen from the New Bern District. Hundreds more volunteers from across North Carolina

Highland Scot Loyalists got shot down as they attempted to cross Moores Creek Bridge before dawn on February 27, 1776.

also mustered and marched toward the Lower Cape Fear.

Gen. MacDonald's Loyalist force was unprepared to march from Cross Creek until February 18, three days after Gov. Martin expected it to reach Brunswick Town. Planning to advance down the south side of the Cape Fear River in a direct line to his destination, MacDonald found his route blocked by Moore's regiment entrenched at Rockfish Creek, several miles below Cross Creek. Rather than offer battle, MacDonald retraced his steps to march down the north side of the river. It then became a game of cat and mouse as the Loyalists attempted to keep their whereabouts secret with the Patriots trying to find and stop them.

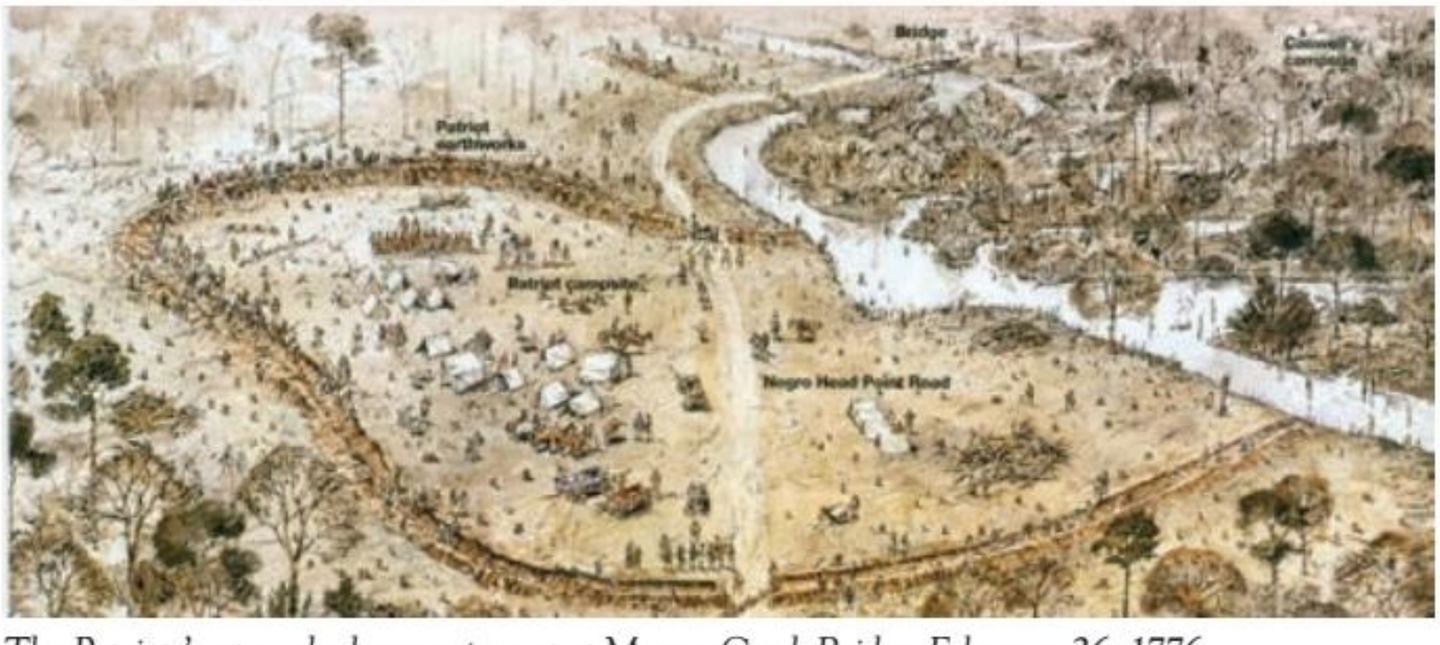
Moore figured that MacDonald's new line of advance meant he would have to cross Moores Creek in northwest New Hanover County (modern Pender County). Moores Creek was named for the widow Elizabeth Moore, whose late husband was a German Palatine immigrant to New Bern and landowner in New Hanover County. The sluggish stream is a narrow but deep tributary of the Black River, which flows into the Cape Fear River. Moore ordered Col. Lillington to set up a defensive line at the only viable crossing point, Moores Creek Bridge, 18 miles northwest of Wilmington. He then sent word to Col. Caswell to reinforce Lillington.

Lillington established an entrenched encampment on the east side of Moores Creek on February 26. Caswell united with him that night, but set up his camp on the west side of the creek. With their campfires burning to ward off the bitter cold, the Patriots bedded down for the night. About midnight an officer of the guard allowed a mounted Loyalist courier named James Hepburn to pass through Caswell's lines. Ostensibly Hepburn was there to present Col. Caswell with a demand from Gen. MacDonald for him and his men to lay down their arms and reassert their loyalty to the king. In reality his mission was to scout out the Patriots' position and count their numbers. Caswell adamantly refused MacDonald's ultimatum, sending Hepburn back to the Loyalists' camp. Knowing that Hepburn would reveal his location to Gen. MacDonald, Caswell abandoned his campsite and joined Lillington on the opposite side of the creek.

Armed with James Hepburn's intelligence, several hundred armed Highland Scots stormed into Caswell's camp in the pre-dawn hours of February 27, hoping to catch the rebels by surprise as they slept. The Scots were led by Lt. Col. Donald MacLeod, second in command of the Loyalist army. MacDonald had taken ill and remained in camp 6 miles to the rear. With Caswell's campfires still smoldering, MacLeod believed the rebels had retreated in haste. Despite the darkness, scouts found Moores Creek Bridge nearby, and fired their muskets at shadowy figures, who they assumed were enemy sentinels, on the other side. The musketry startled MacLeod, who rushed toward it. The Loyalists quickly discovered that they would not be able to make an easy crossing of the bridge as the Patriots had removed its pine planks and greased the girders with soft soap and tallow. In MacLeod's mind, this only reinforced his certainty that the enemy was on the run and could be overtaken if he and his men pushed forward.

Capt. John Campbell stepped to the front with a group of about 75 kilted Scotsmen armed with the traditional Gaelic broadsword, a massive blade called a claymore popularized in the movie *Braveheart*, starring Mel Gibson as William Wallace, who gave his life fighting for Scottish independence from England in 13th century. Campbell and MacLeod, with a borrowed broadsword, and Campbell's men jabbed the points of their blades into the stringers and used the two-handed weapons to keep their balance as they gingerly crossed the bridge.

Without even waiting for the main force to get over the bridge, MacLeod ordered his men to follow him. They rushed "in a most furious manner" up a narrow causeway flanked by a deep cypress swamp. Just as they reached high ground, they heard armed men standing up, the clanging of canteens, the cocking of muskets, and the barking of orders by officers to make ready to fire. Suddenly a sheet of flames



The Patriots' entrenched encampment at Moores Creek Bridge, February 26, 1776

Monument to women of the American Revolution at Moores Creek National Battlefield

from musket and cannon fire greeted the Highlanders at point-blank range. In the pre-dawn darkness, they never saw the rebels until it was too late. More volleys of shot and shell quickly followed, including canister fired from two cannons supposedly named "Mother Covington" and "Mother Covington's Daughter."

At the head of the column, Donald MacLeod died instantly, his body reportedly riddled by some 20 bullets. Campbell was also killed along with 30 to 40 other Loyalists, some of whom were hit trying to cross the bridge, their bodies falling into the dark, cold waters of Moores Creek. Shocked by the unexpected storm of fire and the loss of their leaders, panicked Loyalists still on the west side of the creek took off running to the rear.

Emboldened Patriot soldiers hurdled their earthworks, cheering and whooping as they plowed into the stunned Loyalist survivors close by. Some hand-to-hand fighting occurred, but the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge lasted only a matter of minutes. According to some accounts, it was all over in 180 seconds. Only one Patriot, Pvt. John Grady, was killed.

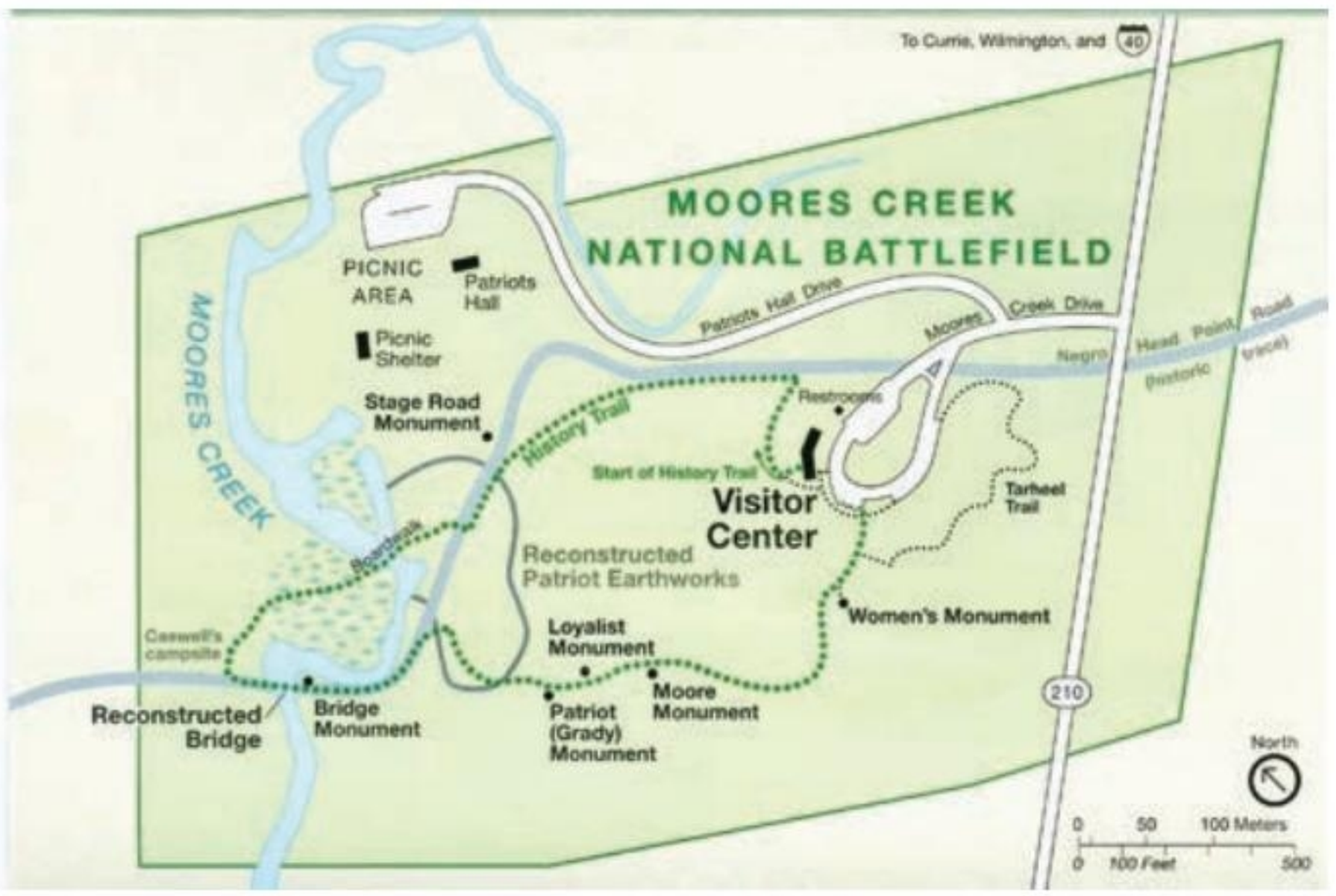
Col. Moore arrived with the 1st North Carolina Regiment about two hours after the fighting and organized a pursuit of the routed Loyalists, capturing Gen. MacDonald and about 850 of his officers and men. They also took possession of many weapons, supplies, and equipment which were put to good use. One Patriot combatant wrote of the battle: "The day was our own."

Gov. Martin was crushed when he learned of the Loyalists' licking at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge. Generals Clinton and Cornwallis's troops straggled in by ships between March and May, but without the Loyalists to lead them into territory they were unfamiliar with, they abandoned the region and sailed southward to attack Charles Town, South Carolina. Their defeat at the Battle of Sullivan's Island in June 1776, in the wake of the debacle at Moores Creek Bridge, effectively ended Josiah Martin's plan for a Southern campaign in 1776.

As for the Patriots, their triumph at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge helped build political and public support for the revolution, bolstered the recruitment of soldiers into Minutemen and militia units and North Carolina Continental Line forces. It also drove Loyalists underground for years. More importantly, the victory in the first pitched battle in North Carolina during the American Revolution encouraged delegates to the Fourth Provincial Congress of North Carolina assembled in Halifax, to unanimously pass the Halifax Resolves, the first official written statement in support of independence of any of the Colonies. The adoption date, April 12, 1776, is so important in North Carolina history that it is emblazoned on the state's flag.

Today the National Park Service oversees the Moores Creek National Battlefield near Currie, North Carolina. Along with the Moores Creek National Battlefield Association, it commemorates the civil war battle, which pitted American Patriots against American Loyalists, on the last weekend of February each year.

Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr. is a professor emeritus in the Department of History at UNC Wilmington. Upon his retirement in 2018, he was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for distinguished service to the state of North Carolina.



Map of Moores Creek National Battlefield

New Year, New Dunes

The Surfrider Foundation and the town of Carolina Beach team up to prevent beach erosion – with recycled Christmas trees

Story & Photographs By Virginia Holman

I am always a bit wistful come January. The holidays are over. I write the wrong year on my checks. That Mediterranean-vegan-paleo-raw-juice diet proves no match for my chocolate craving. Then there's the task that I always put off — taking down the Christmas tree. After weeks of basking in the glow of tiny twinkling fairy lights, the thought of packing up my favorite ornaments and toting my shedding evergreen to the curb is as cheery a task as scraping the Thanksgiving plates.

If you happen to live in Carolina Beach, you may not know that discarded Christmas trees are used to help a valuable part of the local landscape — our dune field.

Though most of us think of sand dunes as a beautiful feature that's nice to have, Kevin Piacenza, chair of Cape Fear Surfrider, says that a dune field is one of the best indicators of a healthy and functioning beach system. "Dunes help prevent surge and tidal flooding," he says. "Though it's tempting to think of dunes as a wall that keeps water 'in its place,' a field of dunes functions less like a barrier and more like a diffuser."

That's because a dune field blocks some of the water with the dune face, and lets some in between the dunes. In this way, he says, the field helps reduce surge by "dispersing wave energy over a large area." Without dunes, storm surge barrels forward unobstructed and with tremendous force, often toward structures built by humans.

The Cape Fear chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and the town of Carolina Beach have worked together since 2011 to reuse the Christmas trees collected by the town to help sustain and expand the protective dune field. Mayor LeAnn Pierce says that the town works with Surfrider "to find an area of the beach that could use some help. Those dunes help protect our town's infrastructure from storms, and this project has been very successful." The town arranges for curbside pickup of the trees and also obtains the necessary permissions from the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (CAMA) for tree installation.

Longtime Carolina Beach resident Ethan Crouch credits a member of the volunteer group Island Women with setting this project in motion. "The state park at Fort Fisher was using Christmas trees on the beach there," says Crouch. "She knew I volunteered with Surfrider and suggested that a similar Christmas tree initiative for our town would be a great project."

Crouch says that Surfrider does a lot of coastal activism: "We work for policies that will help protect our coasts. We're also all about getting people to experience the coastal resources that we have. Hopefully, when people experience and learn more about our wonderful coast, they are inspired to protect it. We host events that build community spirit and goodwill, and for us, that means getting people out to experience our beaches."

The Christmas tree project does just that. Each year in mid-January, friends and families gather to "plant the trees." Surfrider provides a brief educational presentation on dunes, Wake and Bake fortifies volunteers with free coffee and doughnuts, and then the volunteers get to work. Each year, trees are used in areas that show high levels of dune erosion and escarpment. Volunteers install the trees sideways and at a precise angle to increase sand capture. According to Crouch, this involves "sticking the trunk of the tree into the edge of the dune, then tacking the tree down with an untreated wooden stake and hemp twine to help secure that tree to the spot."

Ten feet later, another tree is installed. Says Crouch: "As the sand blows down the beach, the trees act as a natural sand capture. As the needles and small branches collect the sand, the trees start to bury themselves. Soon, there's this exponential growth rate because as the trees start to grab sand, a dune begins to build up. Over many weeks the dunes gets bigger, and you get those sweeping sand drifts and valleys. It's really neat."

Crouch says that sometimes people read about the event and show up with their Christmas tree in hand. Though that's a fun idea, the trees that Surfrider uses must be collected and selected by the town. "We can't use trees with tinsel or other artificial elements," Crouch says. "We also have planned how many trees we will use, and the town delivers them to the install site." So if you show up with a tree in hand, be prepared to carry it back home. (A winter bonfire/marshmallow roast is always nice.)

The Surfrider Foundation hosts a variety of volunteer and community events throughout the year. These include planting sea oats on the dunes to help stabilize them, working on community rain gardens to help educate people about the dangers of stormwater pollution, and a very popular annual bodysurfing contest called the Whomparama, which is just plain fun for the community.

And Kevin Piacenza and Ethan Crouch remind us of something that we often forget: The beach belongs to all of us, and it's up to us to protect it by building community, protecting our waterways, and educating people about this dynamic area.

This year's Christmas tree event in Carolina Beach will be on Jan. 25 at 11 a.m. See Cape Fear Surfrider's Facebook page for more information.

Author and creative writing instructor Virginia Holman lives and writes in Carolina Beach.

Making a DREAM Come True

By Gwenyfar Rohler

"So this has been a labor of love. We have been trying to do this show on the Main Stage for a while," Kevin Lee-Y Green, the co-founder and artistic director of Techmoja Dance and Theater Company, notes.

He is talking about *Dreamgirls*, the 1981 musical by Henry Krieger and Tom Eyen and his efforts to bring it to Thalian Hall. In many ways, it is has become Techmoja's signature show or anniversary show. Green points out that it was the first show Techmoja produced as a theater company, and they celebrated their five-year anniversary with another production of it, both at the Hannah Block Community Arts Center Second Street Stage.

"That used to be Techmoja's home as far as theatrical productions," Green observes. His mother and Techmoja's co-founder, the late Donna Joyner Green, managed the Hannah Block Community Arts Center with Thalian Association for many years. But she and Kevin both dreamed of bringing *Dreamgirls* to the Main Stage of Thalian Hall.

"Even back to when my mother was alive and with us, we have been trying to do it on the Main Stage for a while," he says. Last year was the 10th anniversary of Techmoja, and Green hoped to celebrate the occasion with the long- awaited show on the Main Stage. However, getting coveted dates at Thalian Hall is easier said than done.

"But this go-round we finally got in there, and our goal is to celebrate — it would have been our 10-year anniversary if we were able to do it last year, but this will be 11 years that the company has existed on the theater end," says Green. "The dance end, we actually were in existence two years prior to that."

There are very few people in the world as fortunate as Kevin Lee-Y Green when it comes to having family support for their dreams. His interest in the arts began at an early age. "I started from watching different dancers on television and mimicking what I saw," he recalls. With a laugh he admits that *Saved By The Bell* figured heavily into this. But it was really the "popcorn parties" that his mother helped him put together that held the key to his future.

"I started writing shows at the age of 5, and I would cast the children in my neighborhood," says Green. "The way I would persuade them to be involved was I would throw popcorn parties. The kids would come and sit at picnic tables and we would do a read-through and then we would stage the show."

Not long after that, an audition opportunity for Thalian Association Children's Theatre in Wilmington was spotted. The Greens were living in Bolivia, North Carolina, but made arrangements to commute into Wilmington for Kevin's rehearsals. The show was *Babes in Toyland*.

"Michelle Reiff cast me as Little Boy Blue. From that moment on I was constantly coming over here. I was still writing my shows," Green says. "Then I was doing all these musicals and the thing I realized I loved the most was the dancing, the choreography. So I took classes on and off with Judy Greenhut at Theatre Dance Workshop."

All the while, the Greens arranged life to make sure Kevin was supported and transported to a never-ending roster of rehearsals and classes. When he was accepted to the dance program at the North Carolina School of the Arts, while everyone who knew him and his family was proud, no one was surprised: He had talent, commitment, and a support network that came together to make his dreams possible. But it was after he graduated and found himself contemplating the next step that the real grace of his parents' love became manifest to him.

The Greens realized they had a talented young son with a degree in dance on their hands. Many of his classmates were heading off to New York to pursue their careers there. But both Donna and Kevin's father would face major health problems in the next few years.

"I don't know. There are people who don't feel that they owe their parents, that they have obligation to them. But that's not how I was raised," Green says. Clearly, the Greens had sacrificed and made major efforts to support their son's dreams. When he chose to come home, they had one more surprise awaiting him: "You should call it Techmoja," his father suggested as the name for the new dance and theater company. "Because it's a combination of what you do: TECHnique, MOdern, and JAzz." So Donna and Kevin launched Techmoja.

Interviewing a dancer/choreographer is a tough assignment. By nature they communicate most effectively visually, and verbal communication is a second language to them. Perhaps the best example I can give is that Green choreographed and danced his eulogy for his mother at her funeral. That was the most genuine and complete way he could honor her memory.

As Green noted earlier, they began Techmoja with dance productions. Many Wilmington audience members have seen his dance and

choreography work at Dance-a-Lorus, the live dance and film collaborative event held every year as part of the Cucalorus Film Festival. His dance and choreography work has also been presented at the NC Dance Festival in Greensboro, Dixon Place in New York City, and this past year Techmoja was a finalist for a grant from the National Dance Project (NDP). One-hundred-and-seventy proposals were considered for 2019, and 36 were selected to go on to the final round. Twenty projects were ultimately chosen to receive funding. The NDP further noted finalists who were not selected for the full funding still received $1,000.

Green's proposal centered around the development of a work called "Quiet As It's Kept."

"It is about historical sexual trauma through the lens of Southern blackness," Green says. While he continues to work on the development of that piece, he also teaches at DREAMS of Wilmington, the after-school and summer arts education program for kids in our community. "I am also the choreographer for the West Brunswick High School show choir," Green grins. "I started the show choir at my school — South Brunswick. I came back when I had breaks (from NCSA) and continued choreographing for the groups."

The teacher he worked with at South Brunswick retired, and in the meantime the program had expanded to West Brunswick. "We've competed at the state level. The highest they've gotten so far is second place by three-tenths of a point." Green shakes his head. He also teaches private dance classes, and somehow the pieces have come together for him: "I've been able to make a living off that." Yet he still finds time and funding for the passion projects.

This year his work at Dance-a-Lorus, "Sin papeles/Without Papers," received a standing ovation. "I remember this summer seeing . . . about a little girl and her father trying to cross the border and drowning. I remember that affected me very much, and I wanted to do something about it or say something about it," Green recalls. "I was doing the DREAMS summer camp at the time. I created a version that was accessible to children."

But the more he read about the border crisis and discussed it with people, it continued to turn over in his mind. "This is not my story, but I wanted to make sure that if I was going to tell it, it was authentic. That it was informed. We have so many times that stories are told that are not our own and are not informed, and then therefore they may not be authentic," Green says. He brought in Yolanda House to consult on the Latina perspective of the story: "There was sand for the soloist at the beginning, because I felt sand was a very important element to put us in the mindset of what these people travel on, what they have to deal with, what they lay in . . . it was really helpful for the dancers: it took them to another place."

That concern about authenticity in storytelling is important to Green as an artist and has been part of the guiding force for Techmoja from the beginning. *Dreamgirls* is a great example: The show is about three young women pursuing their dreams of singing professionally in the 1960s-'70s, and the exploitation of African-American artists in the industry. Parallels have been drawn between the script and the story of The Supremes.

"In *Dreamgirls* they take on the styles and the fashions that they think will help them cross over (to a white audience) and then they deal with people taking their work, culturally, and deal with people doing it through an unauthentic lens," says Green. "I think the show is very much a part of me, and that's why I take to it so much. This idea of people trying to belong somewhere and not feeling welcomed."

He pauses, then adds: "It even gets to the point where it's like he (the manager) replaces the lead singer because she's not supermodel quality: She isn't thin, she doesn't have the lighter voice, she's too soulful, she's too African-American. So he goes with the lighter sound and the thinner body.

"I will admit that when I directed the show the first time, I was fresh out of college. There are some things that I might have been too young to understand and may not have experienced yet. It still turned out to be a great show. When we did it again in 2013, I started to notice things that I didn't notice the first time. So coming back and doing it on the Main Stage, I will be able to do it the way I think it was supposed to be."

Part of this production of *Dreamgirls* will include the unveiling of the Donna Joyner Green Scholarship of the Arts. "My mother was very much about getting kids to college or getting them to their next point in life," Green says. "She was very good about helping the youth. She really took to misfits, the ones that everybody else was like, 'I don't know what else to do.' She was like, 'I know what to do.' She had a very caring, genuine spirit. I want to create it for that reason. To get someone each year to the next stage of their life so they can be successful."

This February, audiences are invited to watch the bumpy road to dreams coming true: While three young women learn the lessons of life and art, the man who has dedicated his life to pursuing those same dreams shyly notes, "The second Thursday performance is my birthday."

What better way to celebrate a life lived for the art, than onstage? It will be a very special show that honors Donna Joyner Green's memory with two of the most visible pieces of her legacy: her son Kevin Green and more than a decade of Techmoja's success.

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore, Old Books on Front Street, in downtown Wilmington.

Kevin Lee-Y Green with his mother, Donna Joyner Green

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TY PARKER

A Life Well-Traveled

In historic Brookwood, Elizabeth and Darryl Rogers have created a cozy and colorful enclave with family antiques, rabbits and chickens, and their souvenirs from around the world

By William Irvine

Photographs By Rick Ricozzi

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only a page," said the philosopher Saint Augustine of Hippo. By this measure, Elizabeth Rogers already has many chapters under her belt. As president and founder of Cairn Travels in Wilmington, she leads and arranges tours all over the globe. "Iceland is my current favorite place. I *love* it there," she says with typically unmeasured enthusiasm.

And Rogers' attractive compound, in the Brookwood neighborhood of Wilmington — which she shares with her husband, Darryl, a teacher, and their three sons — is reflective of their adventurous life. "The thing I love about our house is that everything tells a story," she says. "Either it's a family piece, or the artwork talks about places that we have been."

The centerpiece of their domain is a 1939 brick Tudor house, which the couple purchased in 1997. Next came a two-story addi-

tion in 2002, with an upstairs bedroom above and a family room below. The intervening years have seen the construction and renovation (mostly by Darryl) of several other structures on the property, among them a chicken house, a treehouse, rabbit house (current count: five), a party room, and a tiny greenhouse.

The first thing one notices upon entering the living room is the eclectic mix of colors and textures, and masses of artwork. There is a big picture wall with Japanese prints, watercolors by relatives, and photographs of family travels. The furniture is a mix of family pieces that have been reupholstered in more vibrant patterns, and an antique sofa from Elizabeth's parents' house in Virginia that is covered with throw pillows in all textures and colors. "Some of those pillows are re-covered in old dress fabric," she says with a grin.

The dining room is dominated by two paintings: an early American portrait of Elizabeth's great-great-grandfather John P. Pettyjohn, and a Van Dyck-style portrait of a swashbuckling gentleman — "We call him Sir Walter Raleigh," says Elizabeth — which used to be in her parents' house. "But my father did not want it in his house because he thought it was too fancy," she says with a chuckle. "I'll take it!" In the center of the room is an 1850s dining table surrounded by Elizabeth's great-grandmother's mahogany dining chairs from Virginia. Under a window is a collection of vibrantly colored decanters that catch the outdoor light; there is a large china cabinet with family pieces. and a wall lined with Mottahedeh Duke of Gloucester plates, a wedding present.

Adjacent to the living room in the back of the house are two special spots: a cozy downstairs bedroom that Elizabeth calls the Travel Room, consisting of a large antique bed surrounded by four walls of framed travel photographs. "I took all these pictures as souvenirs of our travels. It's very comforting to lie in here and look at all of them." She also comes from a long line of travelers, and family souvenirs from earlier generations punctuate the shelves all over the house.

Then there is my favorite room of all, the Moroccan Room: "This room used to be a bright Williamsburg yellow, but I decided it would

be better dark," she says of the deep blue, enveloping color. "Some members of my family disapproved." The result is what the Victorians used to call a Turkish corner, with chairs covered in Oushak carpet, an intimate spot where you could imagine spending a long afternoon in front of the fireplace with a hookah. Holding pride of place in the center of the room is Elizabeth's great-grandmother's Victorian settee, which is covered in a faded solid velvet. "It's such a nice old piece that I decided to leave it alone," she says. A golden globe in the corner used to hang in her parents' house: "My mother used to wake us up in the morning by turning on that light."

Both Elizabeth and Darryl are accomplished cooks, and the kitchen and family room reflect a no-nonsense approach. Handsome beadboard cabinets are mounted above a backsplash of white interspersed with blue and white Delftware tiles, and granite countertops. The adjoining family room is a crazy quilt of colors and patterns — a deep blue sofa covered with needlepoint and family pillows, an orange wing chair with a colorful seat cover purchased on a recent trip to Egypt, and a mix of family and consigned pieces from the Ivy Cottage. Dad gave her the antique family dining table. "And my mom made all my curtains," she says proudly.

In addition to being blessed with ancestors who had good taste in furniture, Elizabeth has been able to reap the benefits of her grandfather's barn in Virginia, a valuable resource for many of the architec-

tural elements on the property. "He had a coal company with lots of trucks available, and when they heard about a house being demolished — which was all the time — he would go and salvage things. He had a great eye for historic stuff," Elizabeth says.

One of the best of these salvaged pieces is a large demi-lune window. which they installed in the upper story of the former garage. "When we moved here, this was a four-car garage made out of cinderblocks," she says. Now it has been converted into a multi-purpose party and game room, with another kind of travel theme: a trip to the 1970s. Vintage posters of rock groups line the eaves of the open ceiling; 1970s album covers (John Denver!) are used as wallpaper to cover storage cabinets. There is a large red billiard table, a turntable and classic folk-rock vintage vinyl, and ample storage for the family's surfboards (Darryl and all three sons are surfers). One of the former garage doors still opens to the outdoors for more room during parties, which happen with some regularity. And not unexpected in this house.

"Our home is just full of life," says Elizabeth with a smile. "It reflects the spirit of all five of our distinct personalities."

William Irvine is the senior editor of Salt. *His latest book,* Do Geese See God? A Palindrome Anthology, *is available on Amazon.*

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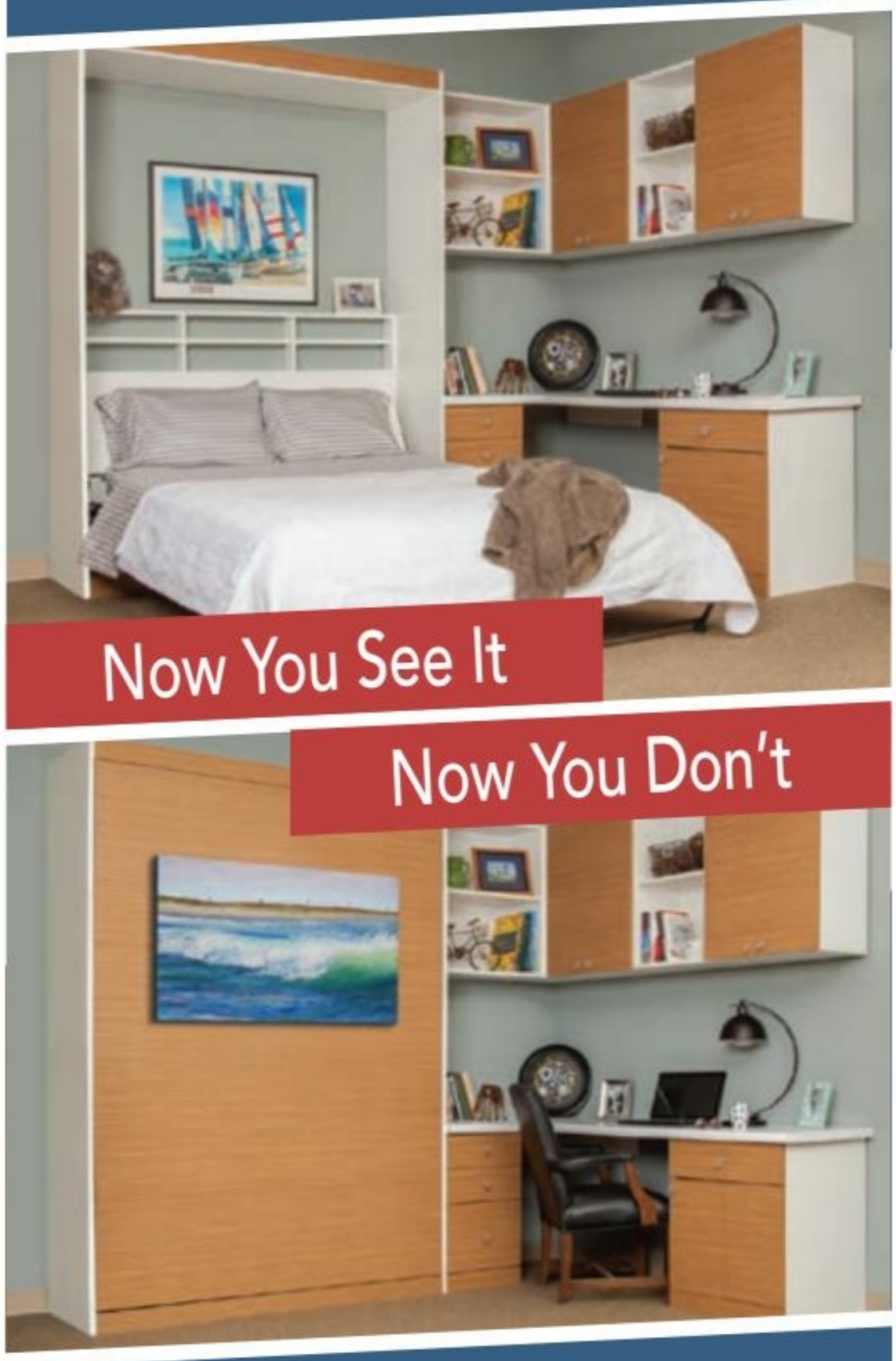

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ALMANAC

January

By Ash Alder

January is fresh linens, heightened awareness, infinite possibility.

Like a dream within a dream.

Last night, I dreamed I was flying through a thick forest of pine, a holy swirl of stars like pinholes to the heavens in the winter sky above me. Cassiopeia the Queen was dancing west of Polaris, and my breath became a living veil, the Big Dipper disappearing and reappearing with every exhale. Suddenly, in the midst of all this magic — flight, the crisp night sky, the dance of breath and starlight — I *realized* that I could plummet to Earth at any moment. And yet the thrill of the alternative ignited me. *This is my dream*, I thought. And to claim a dream requires faith.

As the Big Dipper rose above the North Star, I began pumping my legs, swimming through the air at what felt like the speed of light, weaving between trees, between realms, between worlds.

January is here, and with it, a world of infinite possibility.

A seed of hope.

A bulb, cracking open beneath the soil.

A field of daffodils in the making.

New beginnings, new rituals, new dreams.

All that is required is faith.

Rabbit, Rabbit

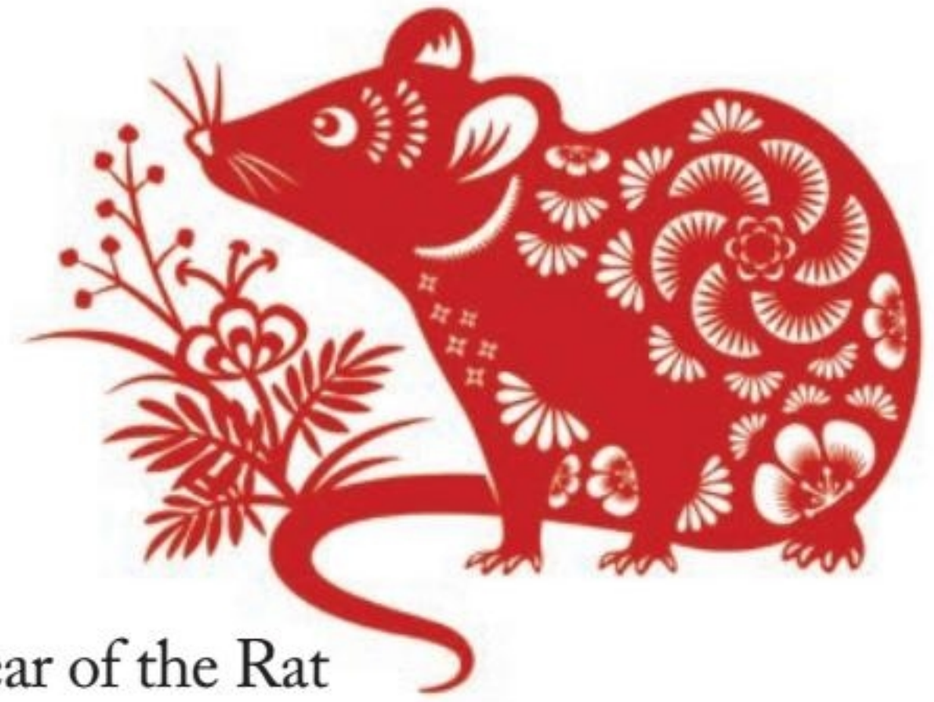
Every New Year's morning in the first blush of light, I bundle up, go outside, and listen to the deep quiet. As Earth begins stirring with unseen critters, silhouettes dance in the periphery. Often, one of a rabbit.

On such occasions, I've wondered if there was some correlation between rabbits and New Year's, but settled with my own belief that it was some sort of good omen. Only recently did I discover the quirky superstition of saying "Rabbit, rabbit" on the first day of the month for good luck. Have you heard about this?

According to the *Farmers' Almanac*, the first written record of this strange rabbit habit traces back to a 1909 British periodical called *Notes and Queries*.

I think I prefer my New Year's tradition, and how the language of nature seems to transcend words. But, for what it's worth: Rabbit, rabbit.

Rabbit, rabbit, and happy New Year!



Year of the Rat

Twelfth Night (Jan. 5), the eve of Epiphany, marks the end of the Christmas season. But the merriment continues. Saturday, Jan. 25, marks the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Cue the paper lanterns for the Year of the Metal Rat, a year of wealth and surplus. Bring it on.

According to one ancient myth, the rat is the first of all zodiac animals because it tricked the ox into giving it a ride to the Jade Emperor's party, a race to determine the order in which the animals would appear. Just as the ox was approaching the finish line, the rat leapt down in front of it, arriving first. All this to say that 2020 just may be a year of newfound ingenuity and resourcefulness. But in case you're not convinced that the Year of the Rat will be an auspicious one, this is for you:

In Rajasthan, India, there is a Temple of Rats dedicated to a Hindu warrior worshiped by her followers as the incarnation of the goddess Durga. Outside, a beautiful marble façade with solid silver doors. Inside, 25,000 black rats plus a few rare and especially "holy" white rats, all revered.

Now, on a side note, it's said that cleaning or throwing out garbage on the day of the Chinese New Year is a spring festival taboo — you don't want to "sweep away" the good luck! Unless you're inviting a certain zodiac animal to the party (ahem), you might want to turn a blind eye to it.

In the Garden

Bare branches against bright sky in every direction, and yet a closer look reveals flowering witch hazel, camellia and daphne, hellebores, apricot and winter jasmine.

In the garden, now's the time for preparation. Prune what's asking to go. Fertilize beds with wood ash. And when the soil is dry enough, plant asparagus crowns for early spring harvest.

Soon, a sea of spring vegetables will grace the garden. English peas, cabbage, carrots, radish, turnip, rutabaga. But now, patience.

Patience and faith.

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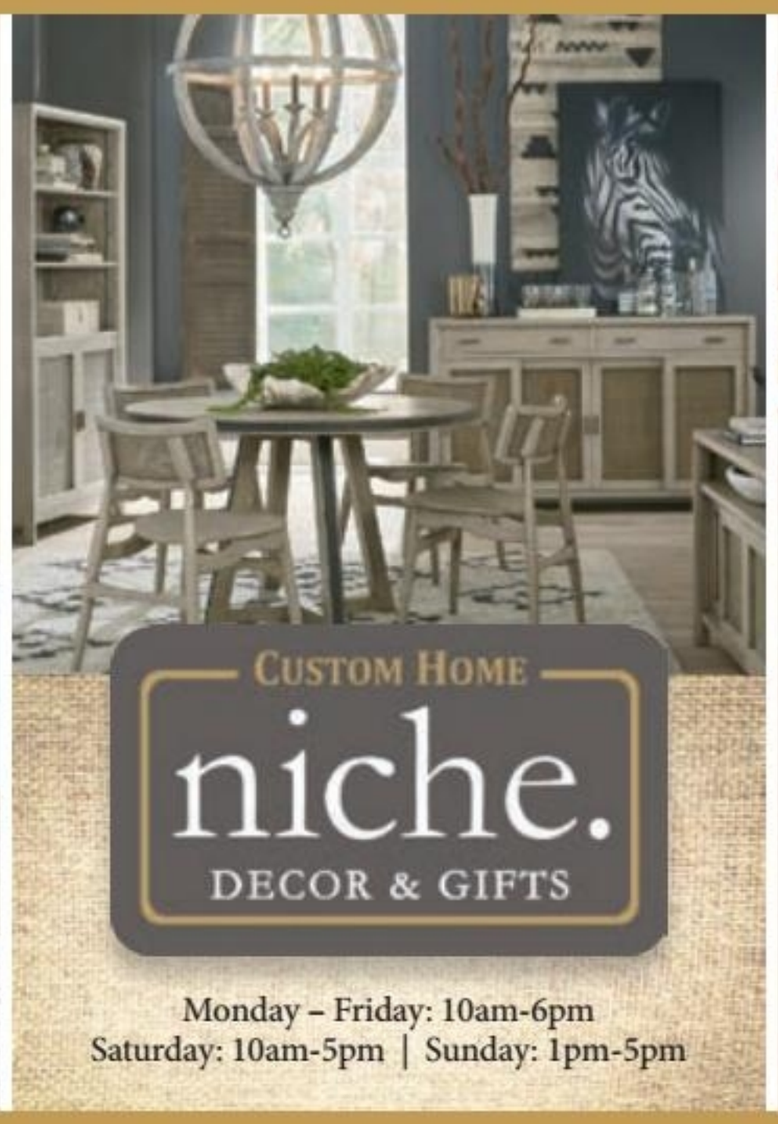

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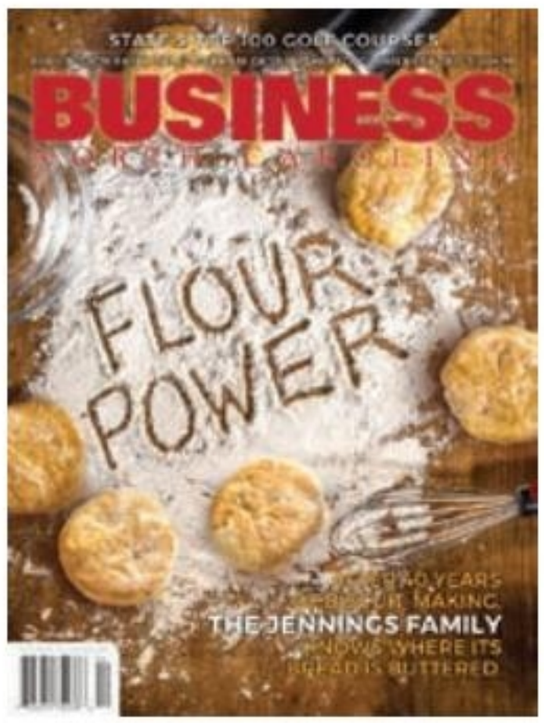

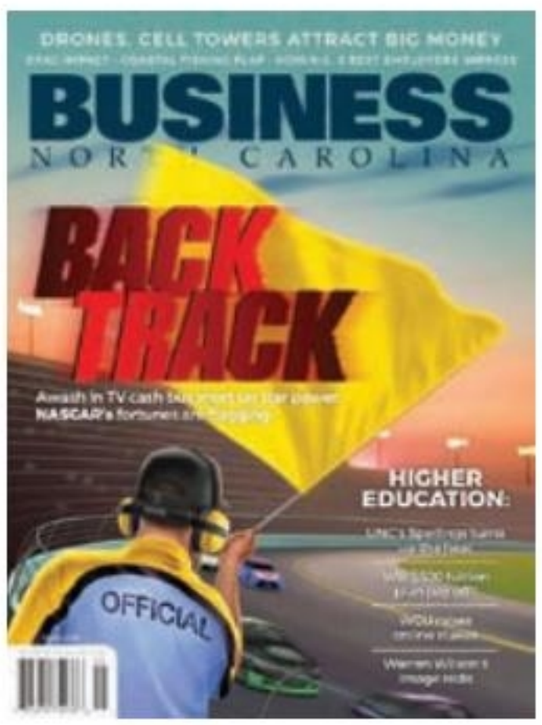

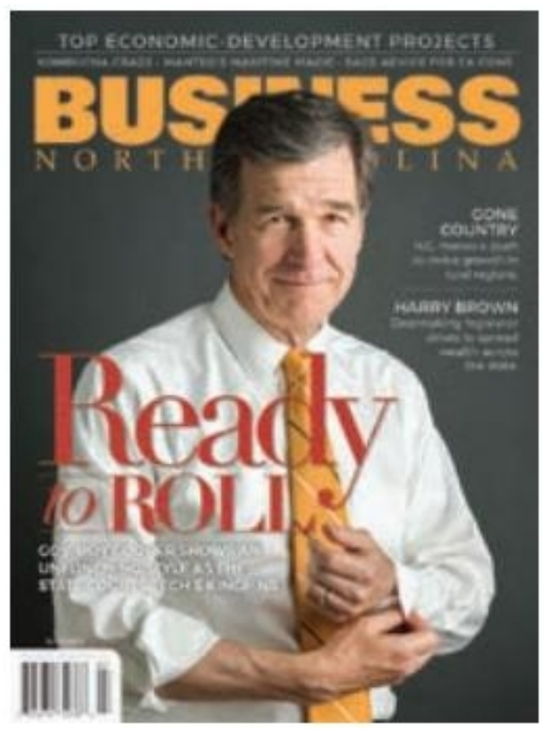

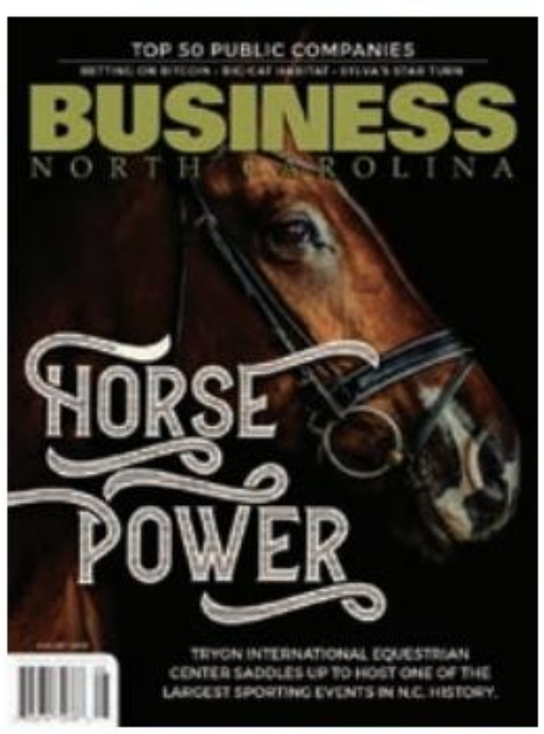
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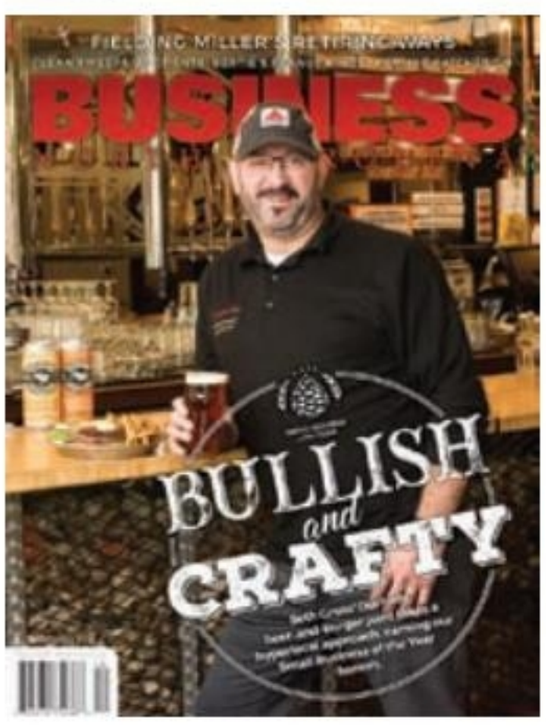

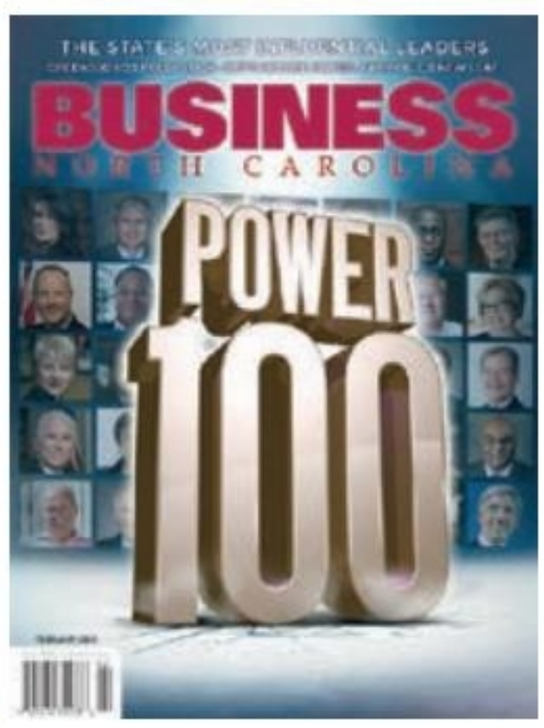

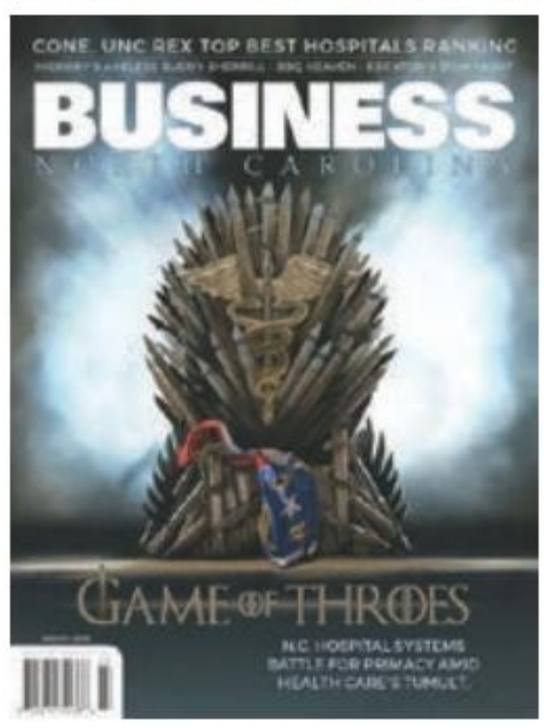

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BUSINESS
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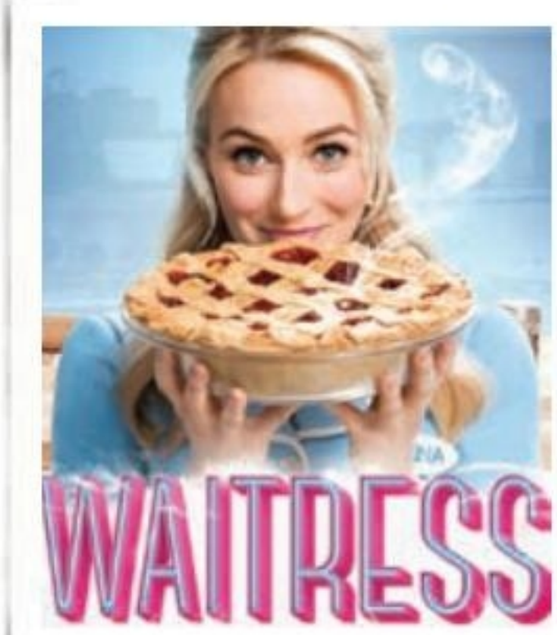
Arts Calendar

Floating Lantern Ceremony

1/12



Waitress

2/4-6

Brunswick County Polar Plunge

2/28

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

JANUARY

1/1- 5/24 Unfolding Noguchi

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Exhibition explores the genius of Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), the celebrated 20th century modernist sculptor. Admission: $8-10. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or cameronartmuseum.org.

1/1- 4/12 To the Moon: Snoopy Soars with NASA

Fun fact: Charlie Brown and Snoopy were part of the *Apollo 10* mission to the moon. This exhibition highlights the history of the mission as well as the cartoon characters' involvement. Admission: $5-$8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4372 or capefearmuseum.com.

1/2 UNCW Men's Basketball

7 p.m. In tonight's CAA game, the Seahawks take on James Madison. Admission: $10-$18. Trask Coliseum, 601 S. College Road, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3233 or uncwsports.com.

1/2-1/5 La Cage aux Folles

7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m. Opera House Theatre Company presents *La Cage aux Folles*, a musical based on the book by Harvey Fierstein and lyrics and music by Jerry Herman. Admission: $25-$33. Thalian Hall, 301 Chestnut St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

1/8 Benny Hill Quartet Scholarship Concert

7:30 p.m. Tonight's concert features celebrated trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis. Proceeds benefit music education at Cape Fear Community College. Admission: $20. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

1/9 North Carolina Symphony Orchestra Concert

7:30 p.m. The Women of the North Carolina Master Chorale perform works by Debussy, Holst, and Salina Fisher. Admission: $51. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

1/9 Hiss Golden Messinger

7 p.m. Penguin Radio hosts Durham-based Hiss Golden Messinger in concert. Admission: $25-$45. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 N. Fourth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or brooklynartsnc.com.

1/9 Jazz at the Cam

6:30-8 p.m. Tonight's performance features the Stanley Baird Group. Admission: $12-$25. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: cameronartmuseum.org.

1/11 Metropolitan Opera Live in HD

1-3 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents Alban Berg's dark wartime opera of World War I, *Wozzeck*. Admission: $20-$24. UNCW Lumina Theater, 601 S. College Road, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3195 or uncw.edu/olli/metopera.html.

1/11 North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble

7:30 p.m. One of the best youth tap ensembles in the world, the North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble comes to Kenan Auditorium for one night only. Admission: $10. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or nycte.org.

1/12 7th Annual Beethoven 15K and 5 K

9 a.m. The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra presents the 7th annual Beethoven 15K and 5K at Brunswick Forest. Post-race party with drinks, food and exhibitors. Admission: $30-$45. Brunswick Forest Fitness and Wellness Center, 2701 Brunswick Forest Pkwy., Leland. For info: wilmingtonsymphony.org.

1/12 Floating Lantern Ceremony

4-7 p.m. This annual event features lanterns floating on the museum pond. Lanterns available for purchase, $10-$15. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: cameronartmuseum.org.

1/13-14 The SpongeBob Musical

7:30 p.m. This award-winning Broadway musical, based on the animated Nickelodeon series, comes to the Wilson Center. Presented by Cape Fear Stage. Admission: $38-$88. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

1/16-2/20 The Self-Portrait

Monday-Wedneday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Friday, noon to 5 p.m. The Art Gallery at CAB presents "The Self-Portrait." Admission: Free. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3031 or uncw.edu/cabartgallery.

1/17 An Evening with Chanticleer

7:30 p.m. Cape Fear Stage presents "An Evening With Chanticleer," the Grammy-award winning, San Francisco-based male choral group, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year. Admission: $28-$52. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

1/17 Mipso in Concert

8-11 p.m. An evening with the Americana band Mipso, which blends Appalachian sounds with modern folk rock and country. Admission: $25-$30. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 N. Fourth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or brooklynartsnc.com.

1/17-19 50th Annual Wilmington Antiques Show

Fri.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. The North Carolina Sorosis presents the 50th Annual Wilmington Antiques Show and Sale with more than 35 dealers. Admission: $10. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 799-1324 or wilmingtonantiquesshow.com.

1/18-19 Disney Magic Review

7:30 p.m. Thalian Association Community Theatre presents *Disney Magic Revue*, a collection of songs from Disney productions. Admission: $16.05. Community Arts Center, 120 S. Second St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 794-1348 or thalian.org.

1/23-25 40th Annual North Carolina Jazz Festival

The Hotel Ballast is the setting for the 40th annual North Carolina Jazz Festival, which this year features jazz musicians from across the U.S., Australia, and Italy. Admission: $15-$225. Hotel Ballast, 301 N. Water St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 793-1111 or ncjazzfestival.org.

1/26 Jack and the Beanstalk

3 p.m. Pied Piper Theatre and the Junior League of Wilmington present *Jack and the Beanstalk* with an unexpected twist to the fairy tale. Tickets: $10. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

1/28 The Second City: Laughing For All the Wrong Reasons

7:30 p.m. An evening of original sketch comedy from the Chicago-based comedy troupe. Tickets: $20-$50. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/arts/presents/2019-2020/second-city.html.

FEBRUARY

2/1 We Shall Overcome - A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

7:30 p.m. Producer and musical director Damien Sneed presents a celebration of Dr. King, featuring music from gospel to Broadway, jazz and spirituals. Tickets: $20-$50. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

2/1 Metropolitan Opera Live - Porgy and Bess

1 - 4:45 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents the Metropolitan Opera Live in HD performance of the Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*. UNCW Lumina Theater, 615 Hamilton Dr., Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3195 or uncw.edu/olli/metopera.html.

2/1 Wilmington Coffee Fest

10-4 p.m. The Wilmington Coffee Fest will feature more than 70 vendors, an art competition, live music, desserts, beer and wine. Come and vote for your favorite local coffee shop! Admission: $18-$32. Community Arts Center, 120 S. Second St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 431-8517 or wilmingtoncoffeefest.com.

2/2 Chamber Music Wilmington

4 p.m. Today's concert feature Indiana University's Volante Winds performing works by Ibert, Ligeti, Barber, and Francaix. Admission: $30. Beckwith Recital Hall, 5270 Randall Dr., Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 and chambermusicwilmington.org.

2/3 6th Annual Milestones Dinner

6-9 p.m. Leading Into New Communities (LINC) hosts its sixth annual Milestone Dinner. Keynote speaker is Amanda Knox, author of the memoir *Waiting to Be Heard*. Tickets: $50. Hotel Ballast, 301 N. Water St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 390-2964 or lincnc.org.

2/4-6 Waitress

7:30 p.m. Cape Fear Stage presents the Broadway musical *Waitress*, with musical score by Sara Bareilles and book by Jesse Nelson. Directed by Diane Paulus. Tickets: $46-$96. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

2/5 Ailey III

7:30 p.m. Alvin Ailey's celebrated dance troupe Ailey II under new artistic director Troy Powell comes to the Wilson Center with a mixed program of Ailey classics and new choreography. Tickets: $30-$50. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/arts/presents/2019-2020/aileyii.html.

2/6 Jazz at the Cam

6:30-8 p.m. Jazz at the Cam hosts a performance by the Andrew Berinson Trio. Admission: $12-$25. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: cameronartmuseum.org.

2/8 Wilmington Symphony Orchestra Concert

7:30 p.m. Tonight's performance features music from Prokofiev's *Cinderella* ballet and the winners of the Young Artists Concerto Competition. Admission: $17-$47. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or wilmingtonsymphony.org.

2/9 North Carolina Symphony Orchestra Concert

7:30 p.m. On tonight's program: Prokofiev's *Overture on Hebrew Themes* and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*. Tickets: $47. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or ncsymphony.org.

2/10 An Evening with Don Felder

7:30 p.m. Cape Fear Stage presents An Evening with Don Felder, former guitarist with The Eagles for 27 years (he also co-wrote "Hotel California"). Tickets: $40-$92. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

2/13-16 Guys and Dolls

7:30 p.m; Sun., 3 p.m. Thalian Association Community Theatre's production of the Broadway musical *Guys and Dolls*. Admission: $16-$32. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or thalian.org.

2/13-16 East Coast Shag Classic

A weekend of dance lessons, raffles, and live bands. Proceeds benefit Hope Abounds. See website for tickets. Holiday Inn Resort, 1706 Lumina Ave., Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 799-7178 or hopeabounds.org/east-coast-shag-classic.

2/16 The Pirates of Penzance

3 p.m. Cape Fear Stage presents the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Tickets: $38-$68. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

2/28 An Evening With Diana Ross

7:30 p.m. The legendary Diana Ross in concert. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

2/29 Brunswick County Polar Plunge

11 a.m. Middleton Park is the place for the Brunswick County Polar Plunge, featuring music, games, food trucks, and prizes for best costume. Proceeds benefit Special Olympics Brunswick County. Admission: $15-$300. Middleton Park, 4700 East Oak Island Drive, Oak Island. For info: classy.org/event/special-olympics-brunswick-county-polar-plunge/e247439/.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday

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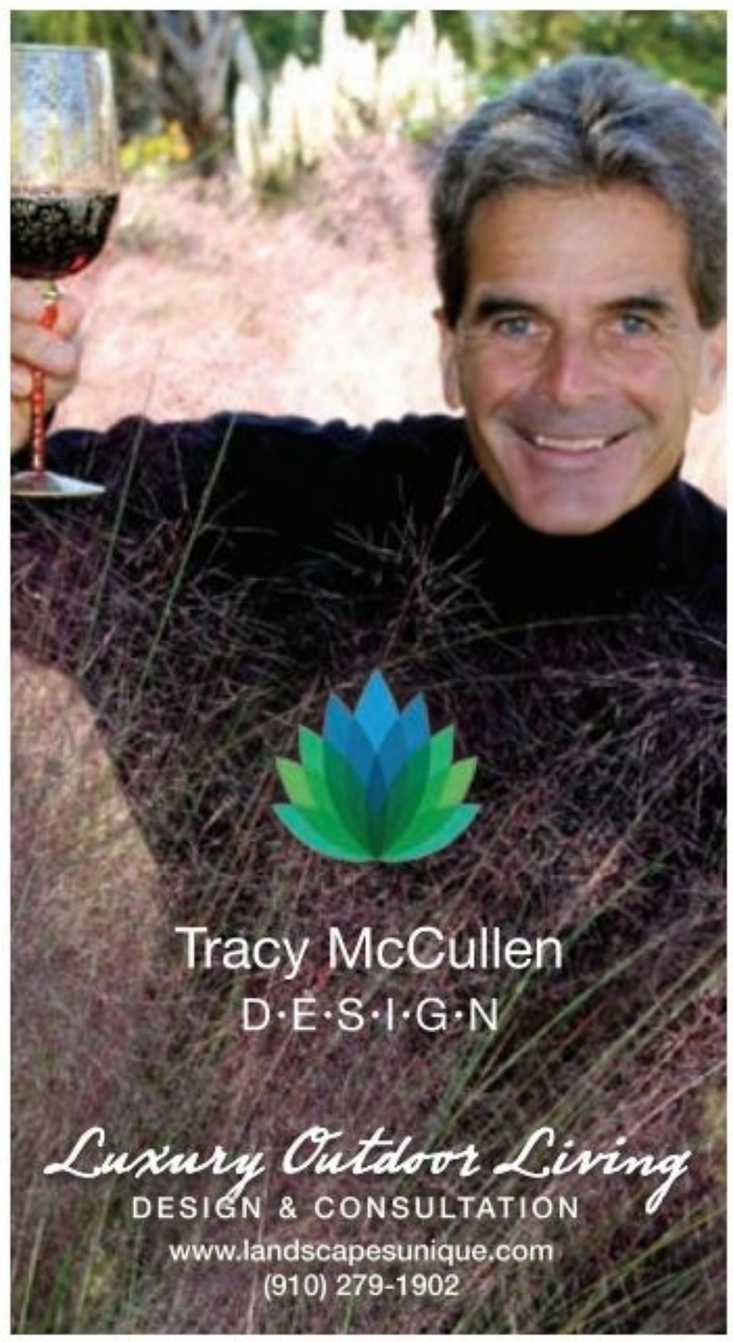


Wrightsville Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Tuesday

Wine Tasting
6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 S. Front St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglass.com.

Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A night of live music performed by the area's best Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join in the fun. Admission: Free. The Rusty Nail, 1310 S. Fifth Ave., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday

Free Wine Tasting at Sweet n Savory Cafe
5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sample delicious wines for free. Pair them with a meal, dessert, or appetizer and learn more about the wines of the world. Live music starts at 7. Admission: Free. Sweet n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.swetnsavorycafe.com.

Weekly Exhibition Tours
1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. A weekly tour of the iconic Cameron Arts Museum, featuring presentations about the various exhibits and the selection and installation process. Cameron Arts Museum, 3201 S. Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartsmuseum.org.

Ogden Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

Poplar Grove Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 Us Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday

Wrightsville Beach Brewery Farmers Market
2 p.m. – 6 p.m. Come support local farmers and artisans every Thursday afternoon in the beer garden at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Shop for eggs, veggies, meat, honey, and handmade crafts while enjoying one of the Brewery's tasty beers. Stay for live music afterwards. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Brewery, 6201 Oleander Dr., Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-4938 or www.wbbeer.com.

Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to both beginners and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday and Saturday

Cape Fear Museum Little Explorers
10 a.m. Meet your friends in Museum Park for fun, hands-on activities! Enjoy interactive circle time, conduct exciting experiments, and play games related to a weekly theme. Perfect for children ages 3 to 6 and their adult helpers. Admission: Free. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4370 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

Blackwater Adventure Tours
Join in an educational guided boat tour from downtown Wilmington to River Bluffs, exploring the mysterious beauty of the Northeast Cape Fear River. See website for schedule. River Bluffs, 1100 Chair Road, Castle Hayne. Info: (910) 623-5015 or www.riverbluffsliving.com.

Saturday

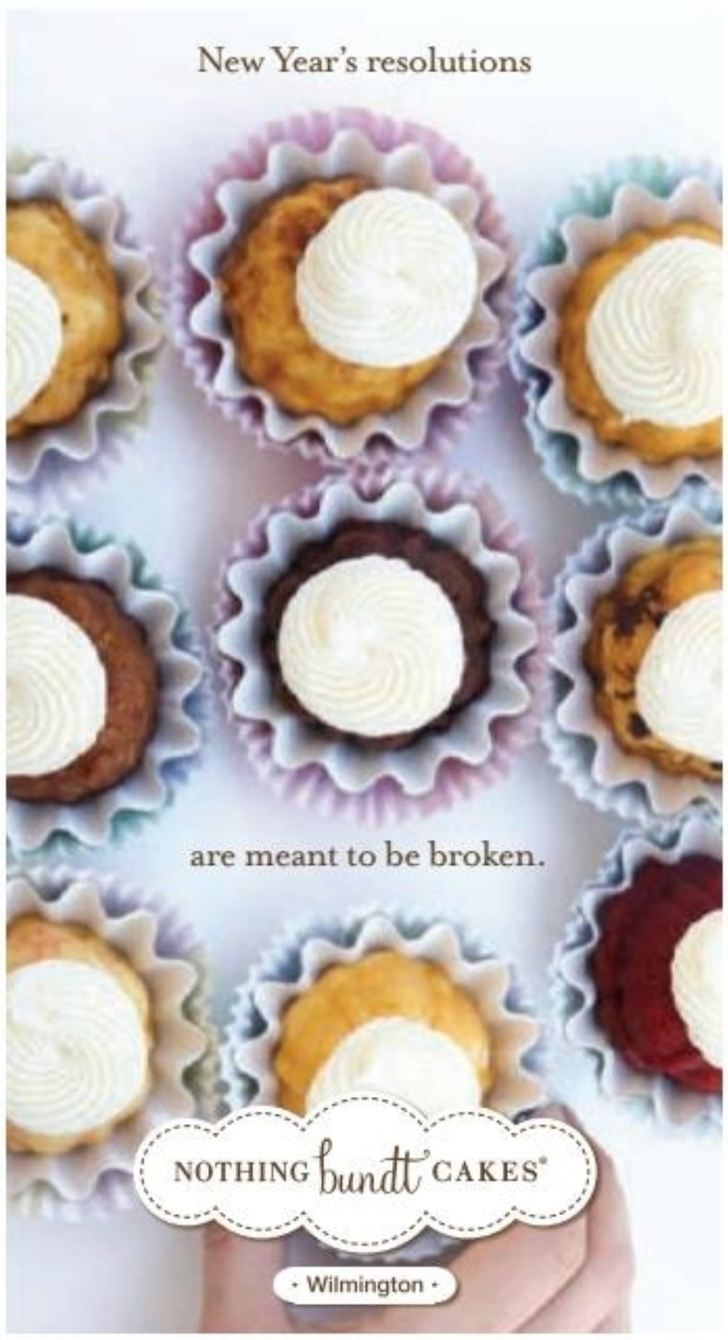
Carolina Beach Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, wines meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Ave., Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-2977 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

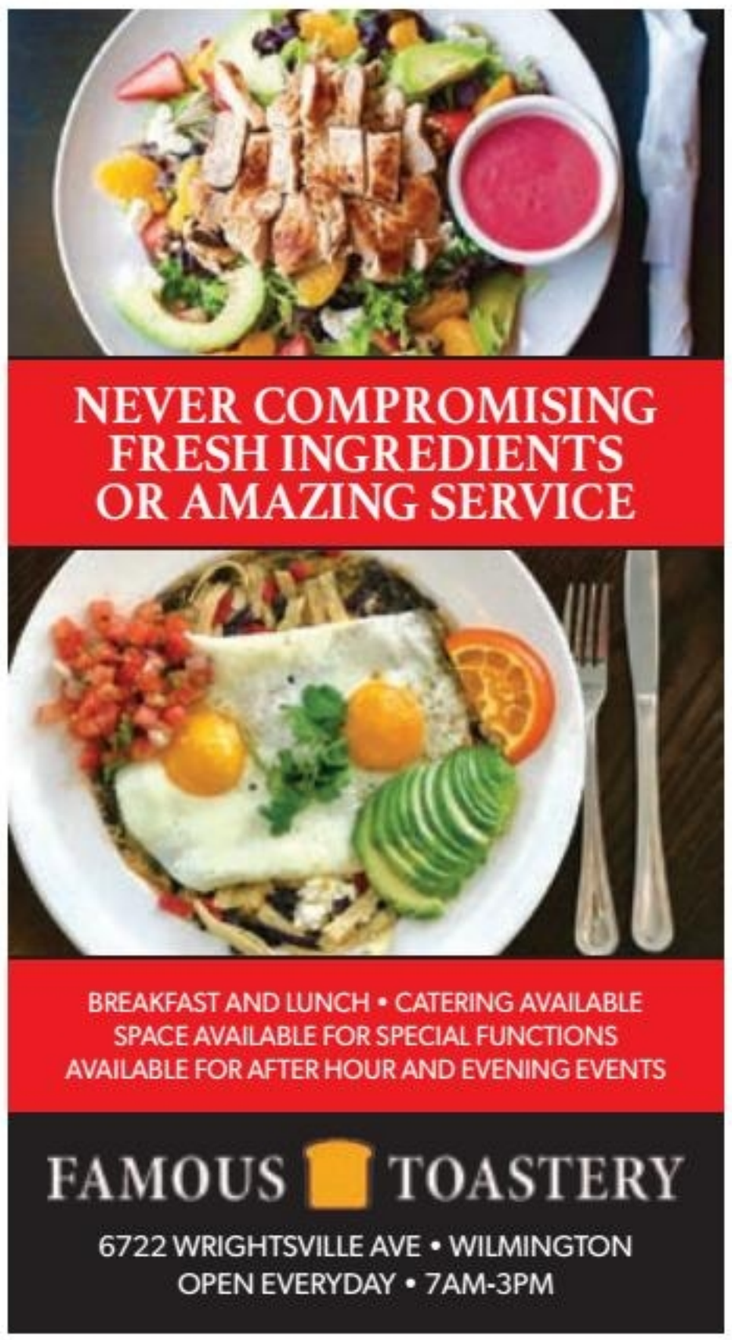
Wilmington Farmers Market at Tidal Creek
8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Weekly gathering of vetted vendors with fresh produce straight from the farm. Sign up for the weekly newsletter for advanced news of the coming weekend's harvest. 5329 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: thewilmingtonfarmersmarket.com.

Riverfront Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. 116 Dock Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

Taste of Downtown Wilmington
2:15 p.m., 2:45 p.m., & 3:15 p.m. A weekly gourmet food tour by Taste Carolina, featuring some of downtown Wilmington's best restaurants. Each time slot showcases different food. See website for details. Admission: $55–75. Riverwalk at Market St., 0 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (919) 237-2254 or www.tastecarolina.net/wilmington/.

PORT CITY CRAVINGS

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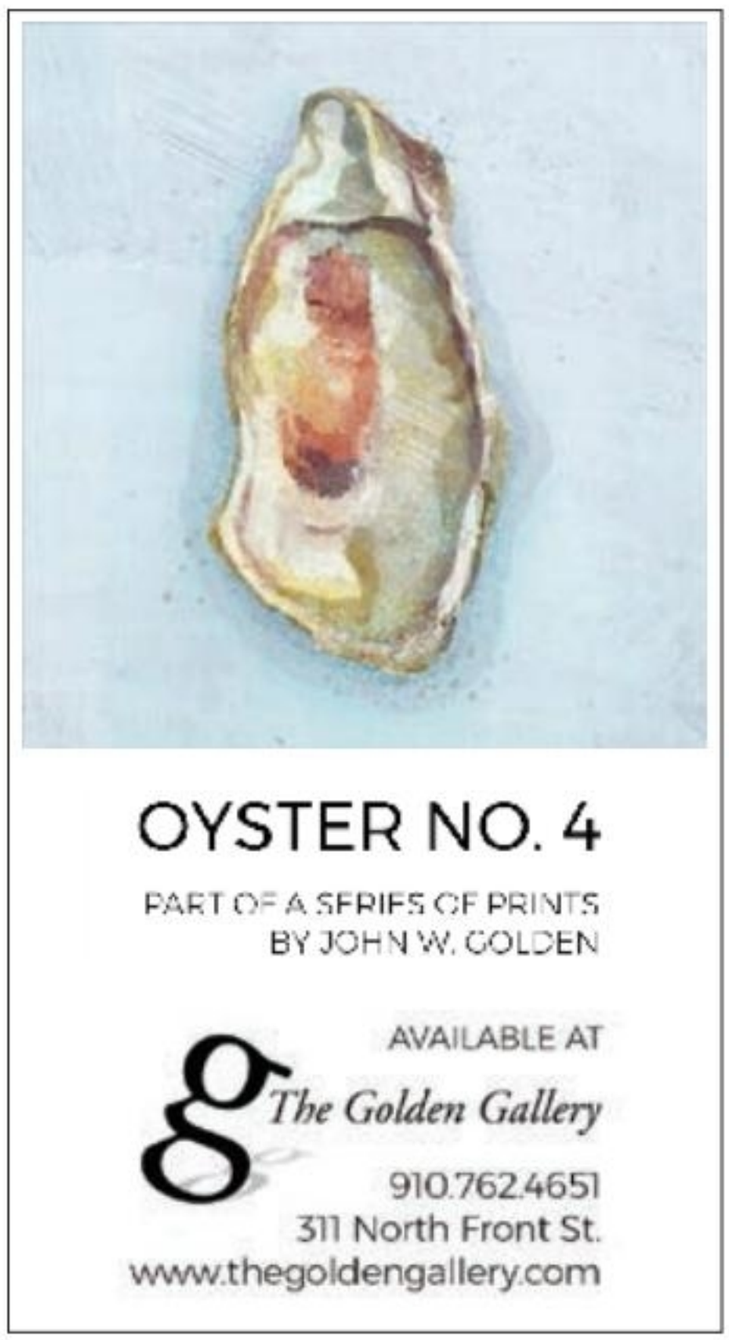


Port City People

Blue Moon and Eclipse's Holiday Open House

Racine Center

Saturday, November 9, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

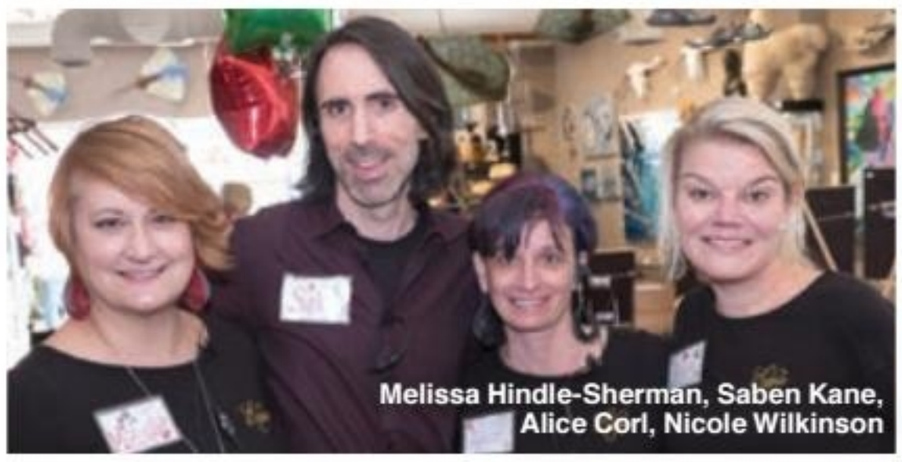
Summer Messick, Shannon Halterman

Teresa Evans, Rick Nichols, Jan Burgess

Roy Richardson

Kathy Taylor

Charlotte, Francesca, Lindsey & Lincoln Holmes, Wally & Dan Campbell


Melissa Hindle-Sherman, Saben Kane, Alice Corl, Nicole Wilkinson

Sallie Price

Mary Ann Masucci

Dale Osborn

Port City People

Once Upon a Time

Cape Fear Literacy Council Gala

Saturday, November 9, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Derek Macleod, Robert Tomkinson

Caroline Neal, Catherine Chappell, Derek Macleod, Kimberly Exum

Lance & Megan Stanislaus

Jackie & Kendall Fowler

Amy & Tim Howard, Joe & Brandy Rider

Kelly Stewart, Paul Dudash

Jean-Pierre Saintard Valiente, Annette Moring, Daniel Saintard Valiente

Susan Hill, Tom Dorgan, Shannon Gentry

Christy Dameron, Kelly Sechrest

Gretchen Stewart

Jimmy Fagan & Lauren Rogers

Jim & Dru Hoge

Sunil Arora, Karen Hanson, Bopinder Phull, PhD

Port City People

7th Annual Taste of Wrightsville Beach

A benefit for Weekend Meals on Wheels

Sunday, November 17, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Lisa Weeks, Sharon Laney, Sandy & Don Spiers, Jennie Barker

Laura Psaros, Ryan Donovan, Patrick Kennedy, Jordan Hudson

Dani Tridico, Jim Radle

Hanna Holt, LJ Coward, Michelle Clark, Tondea Jackson

Clay A Collier, Angela McKinnon

Cain Bowers, Travis Hammer, Tara Hess

Tommy Zammery, Kevin Carver, Brady Garner, Brett Zomer

Tom, Etta & Shannon Dorgan, Birdie & Emily Smith

Kelly Barnes, Bobby Brandon

Robin McDonald Hosley, Ashley Robbins, Bob McDonald, Wylene Booth McDonald

Greg & Cat Marinich

Leo, Jessica & Zach Kraszeski

Port City People

2nd Annual Chaine de Rotisseurs Foundation Scholarship Dinner

For the Cape Fear Community College Culinary Institute

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Diane Withrow (2nd from left) with her students

Gwen Guilliksen with students

Gwen Gulliksen, Stefan Davis, James Nelson

Broc Bilby, Sokun & Guillaume Slama, John Willse, Bethany Guertin

John Willse

Gwen Guilliksen, James Nelson

John Willse, Cary Luken, James Nelson

Veronica Godwin, Lauren Wolf, Erica Nelson

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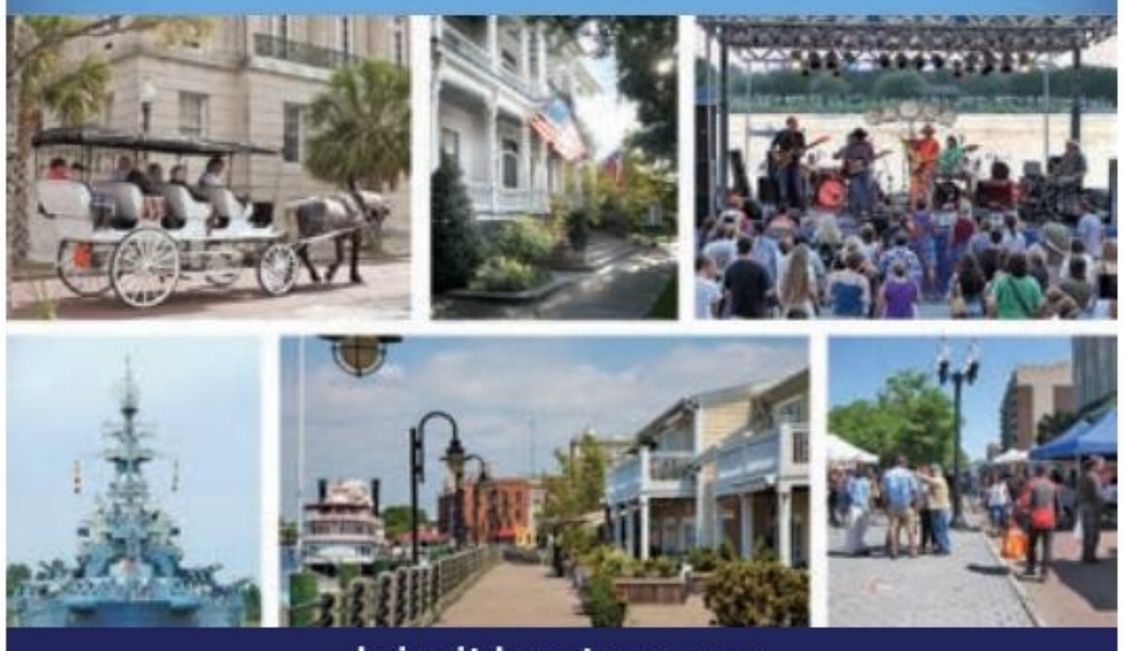

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Feeling Your Goats

Everyone will experience the Capricorn Effect in 2020

By Astrid Stellanova

Eat your peas and collards, Star Children. Tradition will matter. Soften your hearts and strengthen your minds.

On January 3, Mercury joins the Sun, Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto in Capricorn, meaning none of the signs can escape the Capricorn Effect in 2020.

Here's what the sky says: The new year brings a new vision, and, er, caps off the past two years of tumult, transition, mergers and misfires, with calculation and transformations that will change our realities. As any astrologer will tell you: The Goat always triumphs.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
You have to think about your professional image, Sugar, or feel like you do. You've worried yourself half sick over how you stack up, because you pit yourself against an old nemesis with big juju. Basically everyone from Here Comes Honey Boo Boo could outclass this old blow-hard rival. Stop worrying.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Confidential matters and family secrets have kept you knotted up. Listen, if karma won't slap you, ole Astrid has to, because it's time you noticed you don't have to be the standard-bearer for integrity and discretion.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
There are changes to your inner circle, and close networks that have been shifting. The old dynamic is completely changed, in case you didn't notice. Want to be the ringmaster of the s*@t show? Don't think so, Honey Bun.

Aries (March 21-April 19)
I'm thinking you seized the wrong freakin' day, Ram. As your mission and position have changed, did you notice exactly what condition your condition was in? Right —you were too busy seizing. Let it go. Not yours to wrestle with.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
You, Brothers and Sistahs, are sweet but twisted. Some of that blunt force you used will get you over the fence to new places this year, but also forces you to take a kinder view of the differences. That makes the new places mean something.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
One side of you strongly wants to do the right thing. The other side of you wrestles with giving others their fair share, due credit and fair play. You insist it ain't your pasture, not your bull crap, but, sometimes, Sugar, it is.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Focus on close relationships, Sweet Pea, like your partners at work and at home. It is worth remembering that they are the ham in your ham sandwich. The jam in your PB&J. The clapper in your Liberty Bell.

Leo (July 23-August 22)
You aren't a fan of fitness or workouts, but your life and lifestyle demand a reboot. It will also need to be interior — think volunteering or offering your services. Don't rush when you're waiting for the last dang minute.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The next generation, Sugar, is writ large in your sign. Think babies, teens, pregnancies and young adults populating your life. Things are coming full circle. What does this signify? Why don't you overthink it?

Libra (September 23–October 22)

Home, family and land are all at the center of your world. Given how outdone you feel by those near and dear, realize everybody knows your give-a-damn is busted all to pieces. But giving again, and communicating will be your redemption.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You're thinking, Excuse me, Dante, but what circle of hell is this? Yet the things you excel at (even if you wish they would go away) include publishing, communicating and educating, and they keep offering opportunity. Take the stage, Sugar, and ascend.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
Just show you the money. Everything you do concerning property, charity, and finance will work for you and benefit others. Keep your head up, Darlin', or that crown will slide right off.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

New Year's Resolutions?

Kale, No!

By Annie Gray Sprunt

Anyone who has known me might have noticed that my girth fluctuates from time to time. I have clothes in my closet from size 4 to 16. The 16s feel so good, I might even try some 18s!

The problem is that when I undergo a Slenderella transformation, it's usually attributed to some unfortunate life event, death, divorce or situational depression. Nothing like a little "trauma trim" to help drop off the extra heft. Right now, I'm clearly happy as a clam, or should I say happy as a heavy cream clam chowder sprinkled with bacon served in a buttered bread bowl.

During this Rubenesque era, I've decided to take great pride in my voluptuousness, and embrace myself, curves and all. I represent the good fat, like the luscious avocado. There are no Cheetos in my cellulite, no Bagel Bites in my double chins. I represent the finest food trucks and restaurants from Paris to Pinehurst, like a billboard of appreciation. I'm waiting for the National Restaurant Association to bestow a lifetime achievement award to me anytime now. And I love the fact that so many people are gluten-free; that means more gluten for me.

Years ago, I was dressing for a party and was despondent because nothing fit; I felt frumpy and thought about cancelling. But my husband, with the nicest of intentions, said, "Annie Gray, every girl wants to be the prettiest, thinnest belle of the ball, so if you just show up, everybody else will feel good about themselves."

Luckily, there wasn't a gun nearby, but he did have a point. By just showing up, I could provide a good deed of public service for all those lovely girls starving themselves to death.

I used to pour myself into the most excruciatingly binding foundation garments, only to feel like Jabba the Hutt. Inevitably, I would fall into a little Kickapoo Joy Juice and rip that foundation garment off and stuff it in the powder room trash can. Just so you know, Spanx aren't cheap!

I can't tell you how many times people have remarked on my girth. One lady friend of mine, who shall remain nameless (unless you ask me in person), every single time I see her, exclaims in delight that I have lost weight when clearly I haven't. She seems so thrilled at my perceived success that I feel kind of guilty for disappointing her.

But I'm in good company. My two spirit animals are the fictional Bridget Jones and the very real Oprah. We are kindred spirits in the pursuit of finding our hipbones. I might not have curb appeal, but I certainly have curve appeal.

I recently read that J.K. Rowling ran into an old friend at the British Book Awards, and the person immediately remarked on her weight loss. Since last they had last seen each other, J.K. had written six (rather successful) novels and birthed three children (success yet to be determined). J.K.'s literary skills should garner more accolades than drinking kale and apple cider vinegar shakes.

In American Samoa, a full-figured woman represents the pinnacle of status because it is proof that she is being well taken care of, i.e.,well fed. Well, let me embrace whatever American Samoan roots I might have. I'll take being a status symbol any way I can!

I appreciate the phrase "Never trust a skinny chef." I do have it from an inside source (Giada De Laurentiis) that celebrity chefs do not eat their own creations. When demonstrating their culinary skills on TV, there is a hidden spit bucket, so they don't have to swallow what they are fake-tasting. (Kinda like Bill Clinton admitting to smoking dope but never inhaling – what's the point?)

And yes, of course, I would love to be able to sashay around in a bikini, but in the meantime and until the next trauma, I'm going to appreciate me for my God-given, Almond Joy-enhanced self.

And for the record, voluptuous people are better to hug and harder to kidnap!

Annie Gray Sprunt has a good personality and makes her own clothes.

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